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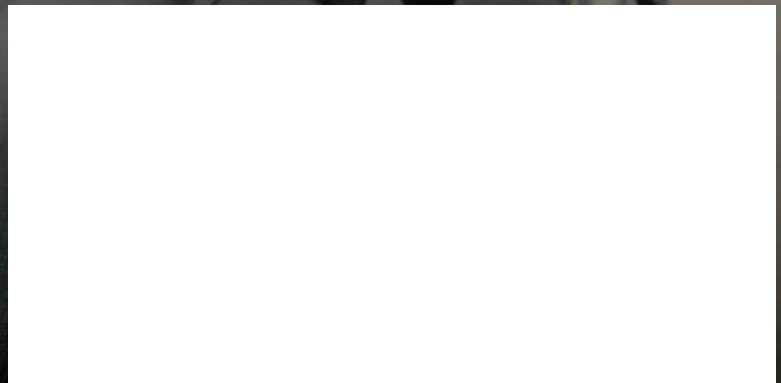
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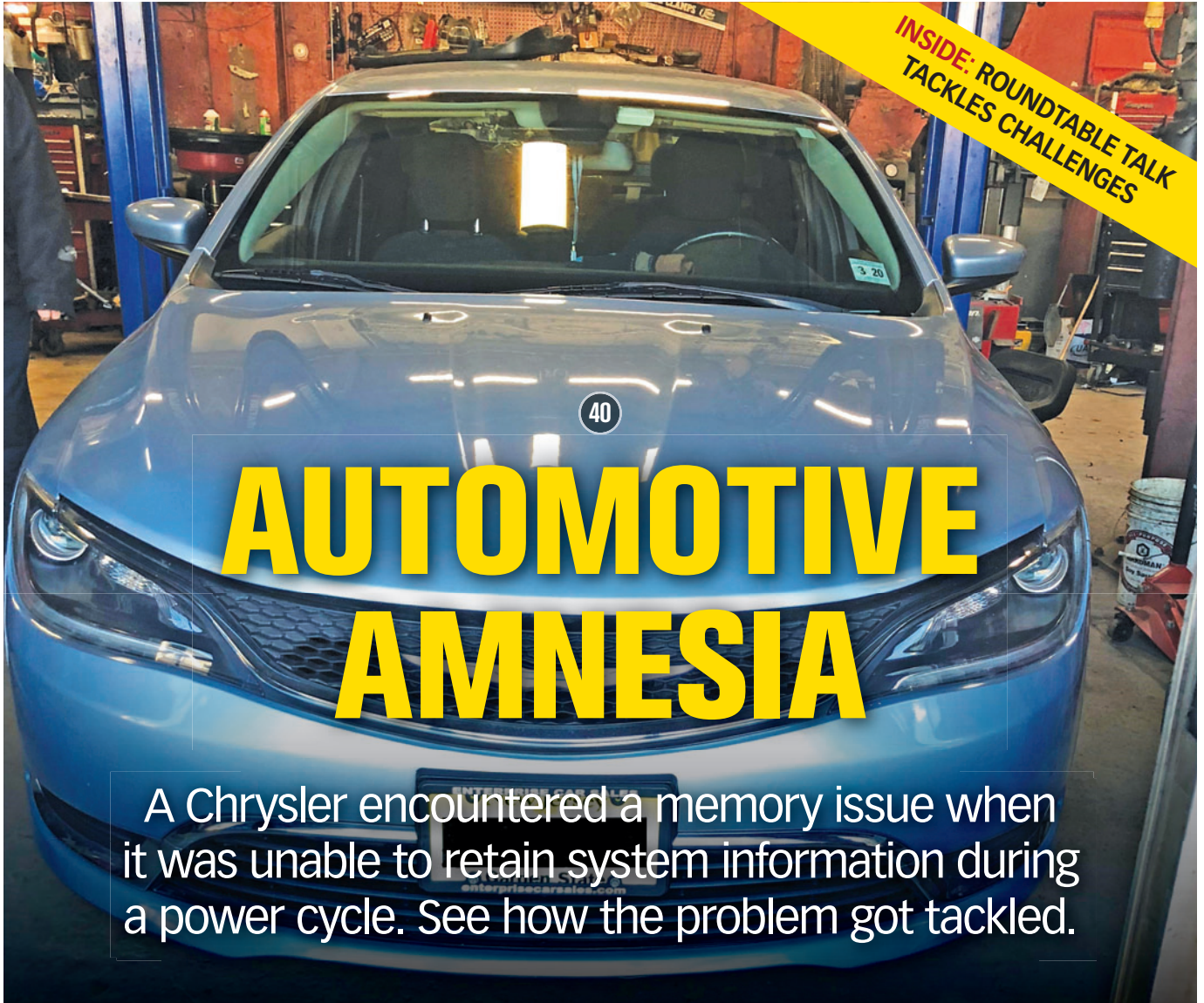
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INSIDE: ROUNDTABLE TALK
TACKLES CHALLENGES

AUTOMOTIVE AMNESIA

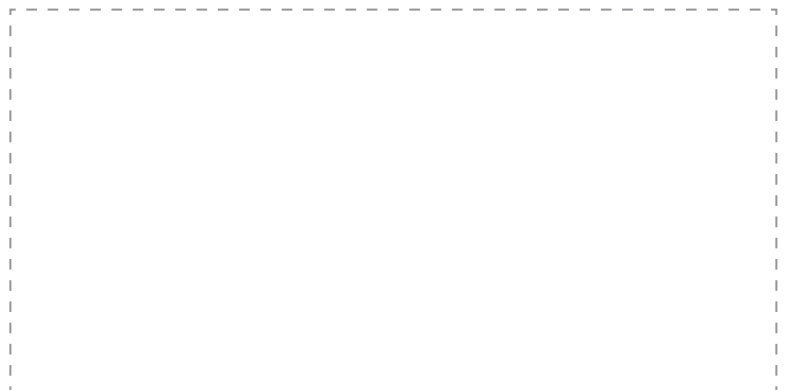
A Chrysler encountered a memory issue when it was unable to retain system information during a power cycle. See how the problem got tackled.

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Break down repair steps to get a better grasp on this work

48 PROCUREMENT POSSIBILITIES

Online procurement systems could be helping your shop today. Shop wisely with this information.



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Auto Care Association initiative aims to get industry more involved

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THE FIGHT FOR DATA ACCESS

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[Watch at ABRN.com/HanveyAccess.](http://ABRN.com/HanveyAccess)



WEB EXCLUSIVES // ABRN.COM

PROTECTING PAINTERS' HEALTH: UNDERSTAND YOUR BEST APPROACH

Employees' health is paramount in your collision repair shop. One piece is personal protection equipment and air filtration. Hear from Christopher Springer with Dan-AM Company, an exclusive independent distributor of SATA Spray Equipment, as he discusses filtration and waterborne vs. solvent paint systems; air and filtration system placement; and what you might overlook with filtration systems.

ABRN.COM/PAINTERPROTECT

SAVE WHEN BUYING ONLINE

Jordan Hettinga, senior director/GM of parts and accessories at eBay discusses the Buyer Exemption Program — a new way collision and repair shops can save when buying parts from eBay Motors.

ABRN.COM/SAVEONLINE

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1100 Superior Ave. Suite 800 // Cleveland, OH 44114
Phone: (216) 696-7000

EDITORIAL

MICHAEL WILLINS

GROUP CONTENT DIRECTOR
michael.willins@ubm.com
(440) 891-2604

KRISTA MCNAMARA

CONTENT CHANNEL DIRECTOR
krista.mcnamara@ubm.com
(440) 891-2646

CHELSEA FREY

SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR
chelsea.frey@ubm.com
(440) 891-2645

STEPH JOHNSON-BENTZ

ART DIRECTOR

STALIN ANNADURAI

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

CONTRIBUTORS

BRIAN ALBRIGHT

b-albright@sbcglobal.net

JOHN ANELLO

atowscopeit@aol.com

STEVE FELTOVICH

sjfeltovich@gmail.com

JAMES E. GUYETTE

jimguyette2004@yahoo.com

WILL LATUFF

wlatuff@latuffbrothers.com

MARK OLSON

mark@vecoexperts.com

PATRICK PORTER

patrickporter@gmail.com

TIM SRAMCIK

tsramcik@yahoo.com

JOHN YOSWICK

info@crashnetwork.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

PAUL GAGE

PROCARE

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COLLISION DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

BUSINESS

JIM SAVAS

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GROUP PUBLISHER

TSCHANEN BRANDYBERRY

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR

JILLENE WILLIAMS

SALES COORDINATOR

DOMESTIC SALES

MIDWEST & WESTERN STATES/

CLASSIFIED SALES

MICHAEL PARRA

michael.parra@ubm.com

(704) 919-1931

ILLINOIS, EASTERN & SOUTHERN STATES

PAUL ROPSKI

paul.ropski@ubm.com

(312) 566-9885

Fax: (312) 566-9884

OHIO, MICHIGAN & CALIFORNIA

LISA MEND

lisa.mend@ubm.com

(773) 866-1514

PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATION

KAREN LENZEN

SENIOR PRODUCTION MANAGER

TRACY SKALLMAN

CIRCULATION MANAGER

DAVID PASQUILL

COMMERCIAL FINANCE PARTNER

SOFIA RENTERIA

BUSINESS ANALYST

REPRINT SERVICES

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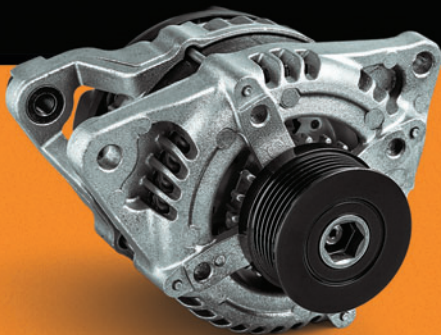
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SELF-DRIVING

ARE AUTOMAKERS OVERLOOKING WHAT CONSUMERS REALLY WANT?

ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

Technology and its constant advancements are always reshaping our world. This is evident in the way we live, work, interact and drive. Automakers are especially quick to adapt and incorporate new technology into their vehicles with consumers' needs in mind. However, like most relationships, automakers and drivers are not always on the same page when it comes to needs and wants.

Ipsos, the world-leading research and insights organization, explored consumer thoughts in its third annual Global

Mobility Navigator Syndicated Study. The study is comprised of three modules, with the first focusing on Autonomous Driving. The newly released module contains results from over 20,000 new car buyers from 10 countries.

Todd Markusic, Vice President, Ipsos Mobility, said the Global Mobility Navigator Syndicated Study uncovered interesting insights on how drivers truly feel about self-driving cars.

"The study confirms new car buyers are simply not ready to hand over the driving responsibilities to their vehicle,

>> AVS CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

BREAKING NEWS

ONLINE PURCHASES

ONLINE RETAIL GAINS PREFERENCE WHEN CAR SHOPPING

The online vehicle retail model is disrupting the traditional dealership model by enabling original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to quickly introduce their products to the market while keeping costs low. In 2018, more than 618,000 new vehicles were sold online globally, nearly double the unit sales in 2017. Online sales are expected to cross 1 million in 2020 and grow to more than 6 million by 2025. It is expected to become the preferred form of vehicle purchasing among private buyers, but fleet and corporate buyers will continue to favor the traditional retail format.

The popularity of the ecommerce model among the younger audience and the success of Tesla's online retail strategy is likely to encourage other automakers to explore online retail beyond just pilots," said Isaac Abraham, Senior Consultant, Automotive Retail & Business Strategy. "With the emergence of novel purchase models such as vehicle subscription and short-term leases,

>> ONLINE CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

TRENDING

SCRS ANNOUNCES IDEAS COLLIDE LINEUP

Registration is open for the Society of Collision Repair Specialists' IDEAS Collide Showcase on Nov. 8 in Las Vegas during the SEMA show. You can register and check out the 10-segment agenda here.

ABRN.COM/COLLIDE19

CREF WORKS TO SUPPORT MONTANA PROGRAM

The Collision Repair Education Foundation is partnering with the Montana Collision Repair Association to support the state's lone collision repair training program.

ABRN.COM/MONTANA

ELITE LAUNCHES ONLINE PEER GROUPS

Elite announced the company will now be offering online peer groups to help shop owners access guidance, support and motivation through an all-new service: Elite Synergy Groups.

ABRN.COM/PEERGROUP

ATI, E3 SOLUTIONS PARTNER

The Automotive Training Institute has partnered with E3 Solutions to measure engagement in ATI's member shops and then provide tools and training to drive increased revenue and improved culture.

ABRN.COM/E3

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ABRN.COM/SEMAAPP



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>> **AVS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

even for a short amount of time. A key and possibly overlooked revelation is that almost 70 percent of new car buyers simply enjoy driving. They have spent a lot of money on their vehicle and want to drive it. That is the feature.”

But while there are enjoyment factors to consider in the autonomous future, there are also safety concerns for consumers. The study revealed one is pedestrian safety as well as other vehicles, while the driver’s own safety is a slightly lower concern. Meanwhile, if a driver did use the autonomous mode, 44 percent state they would still remain focused on the road. This implies a tremendous lack of trust in the system’s ability to safely

self-drive. Another big worry for consumers is the security of the vehicle’s data. A strong concern was the possibility of someone hacking into their self-driving system and causing an accident.

The auto industry is also battling an awareness issue with the new technology. Globally, only 15 percent said they knew a fair amount about Autonomous mode. Markusic indicated only 10 percent of American vehicle owners have experienced this feature.

“Getting vehicle owners to actually experience how good these systems truly are would have a tremendous impact on changing consumer perception relative to autonomous. Meanwhile, only 30 percent of new car buyers in the U.S. have

a positive opinion of the Autonomous Mode feature and only 25 percent would consider the feature in their next vehicle.”

The study revealed there are connected car features drivers would be interested in today. In a list of 16, the top-rated selection was the Accident Avoidance feature. This would automatically apply the brakes and steer a vehicle away from obstacles in an accident. The study also uncovered a strong correlation between interest in a feature and willingness to pay.

The Ipsos Mobility Navigator Study was designed to provide a long-term view of trends and how consumers view all topics related to the future of mobility. Module two and three will focus on Electrification and Shared Mobility. 

>> **ONLINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

the dealership of the future is expected to become more experience-centric.”


Frost & Sullivan’s recent analysis, *Global Vehicle OEMs’ New Online Retail Strategies, Forecast to 2025*, highlights the performance of the online vehicle retail market and future trends in the etailing space. It also benchmarks various OEM initiatives in the segments of passenger cars and light trucks. It studies the different types of methods employed to sell vehicles online as well as the evolution of the online vehicle sales market by 2025.

“Alibaba is expected to be the front-runner in providing ecommerce solutions

in China and is partnering with entrants to maximize its reach in the region,” noted Abraham. “Hyundai is likely to introduce its in-house online vehicle sales platform in Singapore, the UK, and Canada, while, Polestar will enter the North American market with online stores leveraging its current Volvo dealership network. Following the digitization of its retail platform, Volkswagen could become one of the best-selling online automotive brands in Europe.”

To stay relevant in a rapidly changing market, OEMs need to explore the growth opportunities presented by:

- The growth of ecommerce platforms such as Amazon and Alibaba

- Creation of experience-centric dealerships
- Building their own ecommerce platform, similar to the platforms developed by brands such as Hyundai and Peugeot, using support from the financial services arm
- Adoption of a hybrid physical-digital approach to keep costs low when entering a new market. Already established companies can start consolidating dealership locations
- Global Vehicle OEMs’ New Online Retail Strategies, Forecast to 2025 is part of Frost & Sullivan’s global Automotive & Transportation Growth Partnership Service program. 


CIF LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN OF CARING TO ASSIST EL PASO FAMILY

In the wake of the recent tragic mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, the Collision Industry Foundation (CIF) has committed to assist one of our own in a “Campaign of Caring.” The Anchondo family, owners of Colormaster Auto Body Shop in El Paso, lost their son

Andre, 23, and Andre’s wife Jordan, 24, in the mass shooting. The couple leaves behind three young children.

“We typically respond after natural disasters to assist our brothers and sisters in need, but this senseless tragedy has struck a family and small

business owner in our industry, and we encourage everyone to come together and assist them,” stated CIF Board Chairman Michael Quinn of AirPro Diagnostics.

CIF has committed to match the industry dollar-for-dollar up to \$5,000. 100 percent of the donations will be given to the family to provide for the children’s needs. Learn more at ABRN.com/EIPaso. 

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AASP/NJ CREATES FUND TO AID SHOPS IN LITIGATION

ABRN WIRE REPORTS //

The Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of New Jersey (AASP/NJ) has established a Legal Defense Fund to provide financial assistance to member shops battling industry-related issues through the legal process.

The Legal Defense Fund is designed exclusively for AASP/NJ members in good standing and is offered at the discretion of AASP/NJ's Board of Directors if such legal proceedings stand to result in favorable industry decisions, or will in some way positively affect or advance the automotive repair industry.

"Due to the current state of the industry and the lack of enforcement of the current rules, it has become obvious that the only way to resolve certain issues is to get a ruling from a court of law," states AASP/NJ Executive Director Charles Bryant.

Financial assistance would go towards expenses including, but not limited to, legal fees, reports, transcripts and costs result-

ing from the legal process.

Contributions to the Legal Defense Fund are needed in order for AASP/NJ to be able to adequately provide qualifying members for financial aid in their legal efforts. One-time or monthly contributions are accepted.

"[The Fund] is there to support the ones who are going into battle, so to speak, and standing up for what is right," explains AASP/NJ President Jerry McNee. "It's not just for the purpose of the individual but for the industry as a whole. Unless one is willing to get up and step to the front line and take the expense on full force, [contributing to the Fund] is another way; they can sit back, be anonymous and help support the guys who truly need it."

"Based on the foregoing, every member of AASP/NJ should make an effort to support the Legal Defense Fund whenever possible, not only for the benefit of the person taking on the issue, but for the benefit of the entire industry," adds Bryant. 📧

JESSI COMBS — 'FASTEST WOMAN ON FOUR WHEELS' — DEAD IN CRASH AT 36

Nicknamed the "fastest woman on four wheels," racer, vehicle builder and TV personality Jessi Combs died Aug. 27 during a crash while trying to break her own land-speed record.

She was 36.

The crash happened in the Alvord Desert in southeast Oregon, where several land-speed records have been set, including those of Combs. In 2013, Combs piloted her North American Eagle Supersonic Speed Challenger to a speed of 398 mph, claiming the women's 4-wheel land-speed record.

Combs was trained at WyoTech and transitioned into television. She co-hosted Spike TV's *Xtreme 4x4* and appeared on shows including *All Girls Garge*, *Overhaulin'*, *Mythbusters*, *The List: 1001 Car Things To Do Before You Die* and Science

Channel's *How To Build...Everything*.

According to *Road and Track*, Combs was the first woman to place at Ultra4's King of the Hammers; she took home a Class 10 podium finish at the Baja 1000; and she ran in the Rallye Aicha des Gazelles, an all-women rally race. She was even the first woman to compete in The Race of Gentlemen, racing a twin-engine 1913 Ford Model T.

Combs joined the North American Eagle Supersonic Speed Challenger team as a driver in 2013. Her goal was to pilot the car beyond 512 mph, the record for Fastest Woman on Earth, set in 1976 by Kitty O'Neil.

Combs' team member Terry Madden posted a tribute to her on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B1tUB2lHGKX/> 📧

COLLISION PROS CELEBRATES REOPENING OF PARADISE LOCATION

Collision Pros, Inc. celebrated the reopening of their Paradise store following the Camp Fire with its first "Keys to the Future" car giveaway. Terra Hill, a Camp Fire survivor who is still

recovering from severe injuries, was awarded the gift of a fully restored late-model Subaru Forester, lovingly restored and painted by Collision Pros own staff from it's newly reopened Paradise store, who lost their own homes in the fire.

Hill, a single mother who now lives in Chico, Calif., was severely burned. Due to the severity and urgency of her injuries, Hill

was put into an induced coma by medical staff immediately after the fire.

"It has been a tremendous challenge to make the commute to my doctor's appointments with specialists in Sacramento every week with a very unreliable vehicle," said Hill. "I'm very grateful for this generous donation. It will help me in so many ways." 📧

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Pinpoint the small fixes, rather than one silver bullet

Use the numbers to see problems and fixes in real time

In previous columns, I shared how John Gagliano used key performance indicators (KPIs) to build a business that included more than a dozen Collex Collision Experts shops that he sold in 2014 for about \$45 million. Here are a final few key takeaways from John about using KPIs to build and manage his business.

Use KPIs to monitor receivables. John said one of the powerful things about KPIs is they help you pinpoint where in the business there's a problem that needs to be addressed immediately.

"We tracked our receivables at each location, and if we had a shop where the receivables exceeded 45 or 60 days, we knew there was something going on," John cited as one example. "It generally meant there was a problem with the way those guys were closing the repair orders, such as closing jobs without authorization from an insurance company."

Without tracking and monitoring KPIs, he said, you might know at month-end there was a problem with profitability or cash flow at that location. But it might take you time to determine it was a receivables issue — rather than some other cause — that you needed to address.

Use KPIs to give real-time feedback. John said KPIs are ideal for managing millennials and other workers who thrive on regular feedback. He cited his own recent experience at a gym as an example of how younger generations are more attuned to real-time data. A guy on the next machine over at the gym asked John what his heartbeat was, and John was initially baffled.

"For my generation, how we are doing at the gym is based on sweat," John said, laughing. "Now there are monitors tracking distance, time, calories burned and heart rate. All I really had to do was look down to see all that on the machine."

KPIs give those feedback-hungry workers the real-time inputs they crave, just as a Fitbit gives a runner data on how they are doing. "If you're not measuring and reporting anything until the end of the month, there's no way you can give correct feedback," John said. "You may tell somebody they're doing a good job when, if you looked at the real-time numbers, they're really not. They



IF YOU'RE NOT MEASURING AND REPORTING ANYTHING UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN GIVE CORRECT FEEDBACK.

could be your lowest producer or your biggest customer complaint generator."

KPIs give employees ongoing feedback even when you're not there to do it, John said, and help you point to what they're doing well and in what areas they can improve.

Use KPIs to manage your time leading the business. Whether you have one shop or a dozen, one thing doesn't change: the number of hours you have in the day.

"Your time is limited, so KPIs help you answer the question: Where should I put my time today?" John said. "They helped me know: I need to work with this particular location on its cycle time, or accounts receivable, or whatever the numbers show needs work."

That is where the sophisticated electronic KPI dashboard John built for his business proved invaluable. He could see, for example, that one of his shops wasn't hitting its production numbers. But before jumping to address that, he could use that dashboard to quickly dig into the numbers in order

to see, for example, that perhaps that particular location was down because a technician was on vacation. Knowing that, he could spend his time on more pressing or "unexplained" numbers within the KPIs.

Use KPIs rather than look for a silver bullet. John said he built Collex Collision primarily by buying existing shops, not building new ones. Seeing the lack of skilled use of KPIs in many of the businesses he bought reinforced his understanding of their power.


"Almost every single one of the owners whose shops we bought had just kept looking for that silver bullet to fix his business," John said. "Really, the solution is usually a bunch of little things — not one big thing — done right. That's what gives you the right results. We didn't come in with a silver bullet. We used KPIs to locate the little things that needed to be addressed." ■

STEVE FELTOVICH of SJF Business Consulting, LLC, works with dealers, MSOs and independent collision repair businesses to make improvements and achieve performance goals.
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Panel of shop representatives share how they handle ADAS, make future predictions

JOHN YOSWICK // Contributing Editor

Each year, *ABRN* hosts a Collision Industry Roundtable, bringing together a panel of collision repairers (see sidebar, “Who Was At The Table?”, page 16) to discuss what’s happening at their shop, the challenges they are facing and what they see for their business and the industry as they look ahead. Here are some of the highlights of this year’s roundtable discussion (with responses edited for length or clarity).

How are you handling vehicle scanning and system calibrations?

What do you do in-house and what do you subcontract?

Brad Zara: Around the first of last year, we decided to dedicate one technician to scanning, and we are scanning every vehicle pre- and post-repair. We use AirPro Diagnostics, and do about 90 percent of our scans with that. We also have a Snap-on scan tool that we will do some older vehicles with. About 5 percent we send out to dealers for unique situations.



BRAD ZARA

Same with calibrations. We’re able to do a majority of them in-house. We don’t have any of the targets, so any of those types of resets have to go to the dealer.

Luke Salter:

We scan 95 percent of all the vehicles. Our repair planners are running the as-Tech for pre- and post-scans, then our technicians are performing the test drives. Regarding calibrations, most of that is being sent to the dealership. We’ve looked into getting



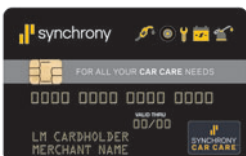
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more into it, but we don't have the space for it.

Bob Noaker: In the past two or three years we started scanning

100 percent of vehicles. We use a Snap-on scanner for most everything.

Tom Elder: I had a lot of faith in aftermarket scan tools until recently when we let a car go with two rear seat belt tensioners blown, with no warning light on the dash. When I went back to the [aftermarket tool] scan, it said the car wasn't equipped with

rear seat belt tensioners. But when I scanned it with the Honda tool, it immediately came up with both rear seat belt retractors blown. Aftermarket scanning tools can be accurate, and they're certainly a lot quicker and cheaper. But the complete accuracy to protect your liability may not be there.

Dave Carney: We just had a Honda, same thing — rear seat belts. Nobody was in the back seat [at the time of the accident], but when

the car was all done, we discovered at the end that the rear seat belts had blown.

Elder: The Honda scan tool is easy to use. It's not real expensive. And it updates once a week. Things change rapidly.

Noaker: We'll definitely be looking into that. We actually have the GM tool here. I agree, the more factory stuff you can have, the better.

Robert Grieve: We do pre- and post-scans on everything, using a Launch or a Bosch scanner, depending on what car it is. Most of our cars are ending up at the



BOB NOAKER



TOM ELDER



DAVE CARNEY

dealer for either an inspection or a calibration, and they're doing scans as well. So we feel we're pretty well covered. By using the dealer as often as

we do, we're creating some good relationships. Not to mention it's less liability for me, when you have an expert third-party in there.

Carney: I have a mechanic on staff, and he scans every car, coming and going. Anything we can't clear goes to the dealer. As Robert said: Spread the liability, let the experts do that. And I don't have the room, even though I have a large shop, to put up all the targets and do all that. Fortunately I have a Honda, Toyota, Nissan and Audi dealer within a mile or two of me. So they love us bringing those cars. It's helping us build a great rapport with them. They're sending us work like crazy. Three years ago we got rid of most of our DRPs, and with the OEM certifications, we're doing just fine.

James Rodis: We do everything in-house. Ninety-eight percent of our work is on Ford, Chrysler or GM vehicles. We now use the Mitchell scan tool and a factory scan tool on every single car. It seems redundant, but we like the Mitchell because [the data goes] right into the file in Mitchell Repair Center, so everyone has pretty quick access to it. The factory [scan tool results] get scanned into the file later so we have it forever to prove we used a factory scan tool.

There's been legislation introduced in a number of states this year related to OEM procedures. Some call for shops to follow OEM procedures; others focus on requiring insurers to pay claims based on shops following OEM procedures. What do you see as the best approach to this, if either?

Noaker: Anything the state has to get involved with never seems to end up



ROBERT GRIEVE

WHO WAS AT THE TABLE?

Dave Carney is the owner of Tualatin Auto Body, an I-CAR Gold Class shop in Tualatin, Ore., that is certified by nearly a dozen OEMs.

Tom Elder of Compact Kars in Clarksburg, N.J., is treasurer of the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers (AASP) of New Jersey, and is on AASP's national board.

Robert Grieve is the owner of Nylund's Collision Center, in Englewood, Colo., and was elected this year to the board of the Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS).

Bob Noaker founded Noaker's Auto Body in Duncannon, Pa., 20 years ago, and now employs 32 people.

James Rodis is the manager of Woodhouse Collision in Blair, Neb., and vice president of the Nebraska Auto Body Association.

Luke Salter is the operations officer at Trubilt Collision Center, which has two shops in Wisconsin.

Brad Zara is founder and president of Zara's Collision Center, in its 33rd year in business in Springfield, Ill.

well. If I had to choose, I would have to say some sort of legislation for insurers. But then again, all those shops out there that aren't doing it right are going to continue to not do it right and just get paid more for doing it that way.

Rodis: Shops should have to fix vehicles correctly. That will weed out the bad shops. But until OEMs put more teeth behind their [shop certification] programs, I don't think it's going to do a lot. I told GM earlier this year when they asked me how I liked their program: Quit telling people

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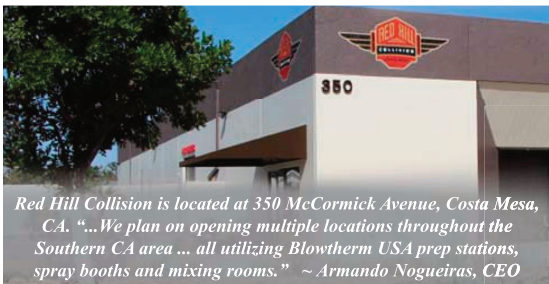
Christian Nogueiras,
President, Red Hill Collision

Armando Nogueiras, CEO,
Red Hill Collision

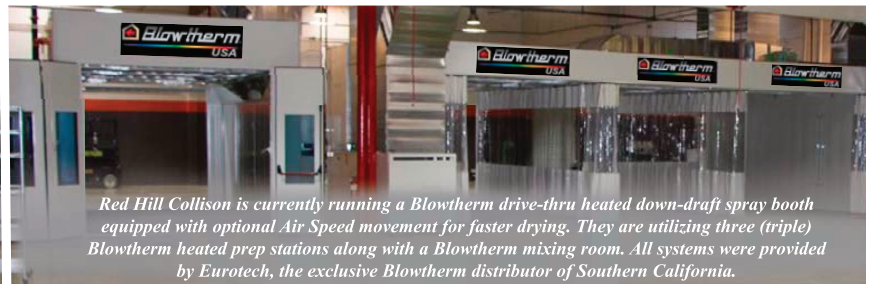
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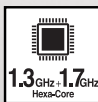


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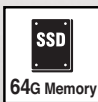
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SEEING GROWTH AHEAD

The ABRN Collision Industry Roundtable participants are uniformly bullish on their company's prospects for growth. When asked to rate their degree of optimism for growth over the next 12 months on a scale from 1 (very pessimistic) to 7 (very optimistic), most cited a 6 or 7.

"Looking at our trend line over the past six years, we have more than doubled our business," Luke Salter said. "We have always put our money back into our business for tooling and training so we can remain competitive."

Bob Noaker said the growing tractor trailer and RV segment of his business puts his optimism at a 6.

"I would say a 6 solely on the fact that we educate our customers about the actions we take to repair vehicles correctly," James Rodis said.

With a 13-year track record of

business growth, Robert Grieve sees no reason the coming year will not continue that trend.

The hold-outs are slightly less confident they will grow solely because of the difficulty of finding needed employees.

"I had a technician of 43 years die in February," Tom Elder said. "He's impossible to replace. I have three other technical spots open, and they have been open for more than a year. I just don't get any qualified applicants."

"Right now, we need more qualified techs who are willing to repair the car properly," said Dave Carney, who rated his optimism for growth at 4. "We just had a guy for a couple months that we had to get rid of. He knew how to fix them right, but all he cared about was making money. So he's back over at an MSO."

when you are going to come inspect them, and limit parts to people who are doing it the right way. Until that happens, I don't think this situation is going to fix itself.

Salter: I don't know if it's realistic or not, but I think it's a blend of both requiring shops to follow the OEM procedures, and the insurance companies to pay based off of OEM procedures. I don't think you can have one without the other.

Grieve: I think it's really a slippery slope. If you legislate that shops have to follow the OEM procedures, you're putting a tremendous additional liability on them. I don't think body shops are ready to be legislated to follow OEM procedures. I believe they should be followed strictly. But I just don't see it as a reality. I believe legislating the insurers should be done first. We had one very large insurance company say they're not going to pay for some procedures because they

don't feel it's warranted. We took it to our Department of Insurance, only to have them say, "There's no legislation that makes them [pay for OEM procedures], so we can't make them do it."

Zara: Anybody who knows anything about Illinois politics knows that legislation is useless. We're just happy to keep our governors out of prison [group laughter]. I think this should be consumer-driven. Those doing the right thing now have a little more advantage thanks to social media and the ease of consumers to research a business. I think the cream is going to rise to the top, and those that are not doing it correctly will be revealed.

What aspect of your business is your biggest current challenge? What keeps you up at night?

Zara: Our biggest challenge right now is definitely the OEM procedures: who is going to research them? How do we in-

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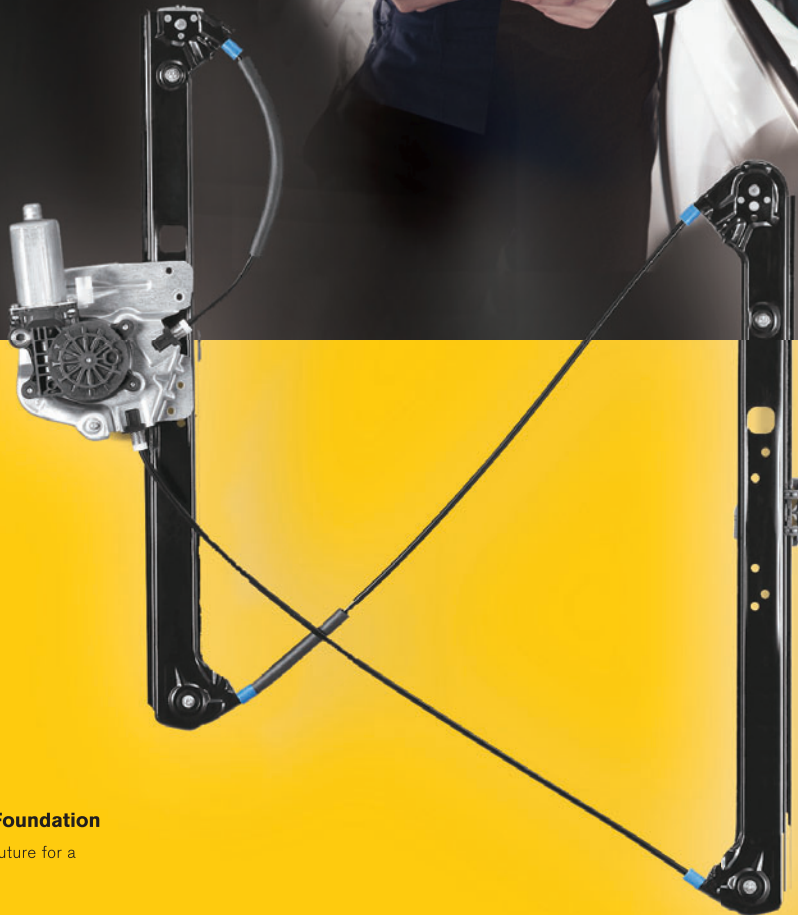


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corporate that into our process to avoid negatively impacting productivity yet still have the documentation? Currently, our repair planners do the research. But even getting all that information to the technician, and documenting that it's been done, is still a challenge.

Carney: We are working on that, too. I did hire a blueprinter doing the estimates and pulling up the OEM stuff, along with a mechanic doing all the scanning. So we're working on that whole process.

Rodis: Our challenge is getting qualified techs. We're 30 minutes away from Omaha, so to get people to drive out here can be a little harder, even though we feel they generally are going to get more hours on an estimate with us, just because we research things and try to get paid for what we're doing. So we are training [entry-level employees], letting them

learn from a quality tech, getting them some I-CAR classes and things like that to hopefully be our next generation techs.

Grieve: What keeps me up at night is what I don't know that I don't know yet, and that I probably should. Three years ago if you had told me that we'd need three different welding wires and two different gasses depending on what we're welding, I would have said you're nuts. But that's the truth, and now we know it.

Could you share a prediction or two, something that you think will have happened or changed three years from now, by mid-2022?

Salter: I think the OEM shop certifications will start being a bigger factor. As more vehicles become connected, the OEMs will have the first notice of loss instead of insurance companies.

Elder: Yeah, I see the demise of the

direct repair programs coming like a freight train.

Salter: I also think there will be a lot more burden on shops to follow the OEM procedures: more documentation, more photos of test welds, more in-process photos. As OEMs play a bigger role, it's going to run the smaller shops out of business, unfortunately. I think the number of shops will probably decrease 6 percent within three or four years, and as much as 10 percent within 7 to 10 years.

Elder: I also think the advanced safety systems on these cars are going to reduce the total number of claims that we have. We're beginning to see minimized collisions. We're beginning to hear stories from customers, "The car stopped by itself and I avoided hitting the car in front of me." These things are going to happen, and it's coming quickly. I think there's going to be a lot of shops that disappear.

Noaker: I would say I would disagree with 70 percent of what's been predicted. I don't think there's any fear of running out of work. Nobody can put their phone down. Everybody turns the safety equipment off. I think DRPs will stay around a good 10 years. I don't think the OEMs will get their act together anytime soon. I think when they do, we may be wishing for the good old days of the DRPs and the insurance companies.

Why do you say that?

Noaker: The OEMs make us buy so many duplicative tools. I think that will be a very small portion of the hoops that they will put us through [once they] actually have more power. Time will tell. I also predict that in the next three years, you'll see a major consolidator close up. Money is not cheap anymore. It's not going to be as cheap to buy up shops. Investors are not going to like this industry as much. ❏



JOHN YOSWICK is a freelance writer based in Portland, Ore., who has been writing about the automotive industry since 1988.
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NO SHORTAGE OF SOLUTIONS



The automotive technician shortage is real, but our industry can take some steps today to contribute to a solution

BRYCE HOLT // Contributing Editor

Do a quick internet search for “auto technician shortage” and you’ll come up with more than 2 million results, many of which are people merely talking about the existence of a shortage. Unfortunately, the solutions are absent from most of these mentions. Some of the headlines use phrases such as “chronic shortage,” “high demand,” “scrambling for technicians,” “shortage crisis” and “shortage may mean more expensive repairs.” Is that last headline enough to make the average person notice?

The largest unsolved problem faced by the automotive industry is the growing technician shortage. It’s not a new problem. It has been a long, slow-moving situation that was predicted for

decades. But as with many predictions, many hoped it wouldn’t happen. Turning a blind eye is something people do when they don’t want to face a problem.

But now’s the time. Only over the past couple of years has the industry recognized that this shortage has reached crisis levels. The shortage is now firmly established and is an issue automotive businesses must accept and address. As an industry, those in automotive must recognize that the worker shortage both has no easy answer and is not going away.

How bad is it?

The technician shortage is discussed at every collision repair,

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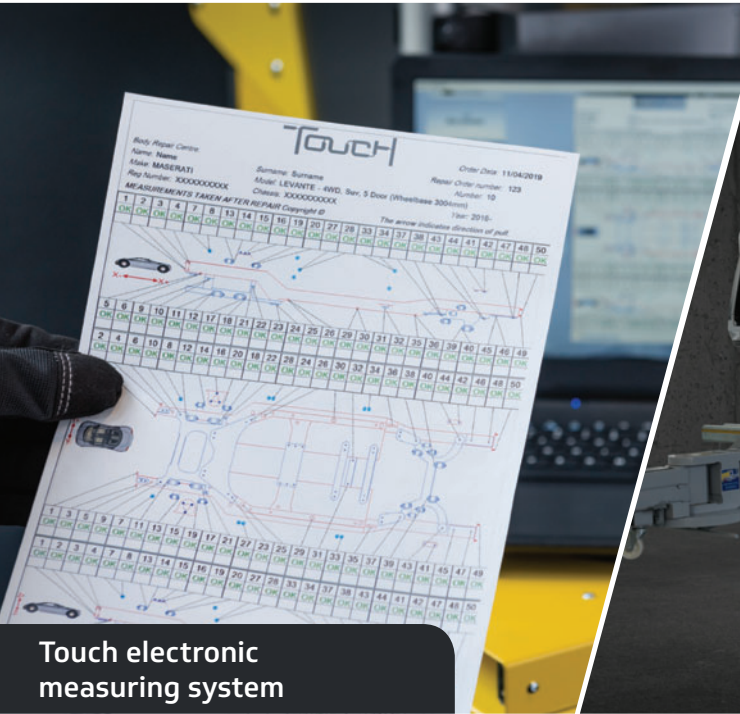
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Obviously, this topic is mentioned whenever conversations are had with or about automotive-related career tech education (CTE) programs. But the truth is that all skilled trades are suffering from a shortage. In its June 2019 job openings and labor turnover summary, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that there were nearly 7.4 million job openings in April. According to the Association for Career & Technical Education, more than 80 percent of manufacturers report a talent shortage, nearly half of talent recruiters at Fortune 1000 companies report trouble finding qualified candidates with a two-

year STEM degree, and between now and 2024, 48 percent of all job openings will require education beyond high school but less than a four-year degree.

According to the TechForce Foundation's "Technician Supply and Demand Report Update for Fall 2018," in 2017, the demand for new technicians was nearly 138,000. The number of 2017 post-secondary graduates numbered nearly 56,000. This leaves a shortage of more than 82,000 for the automotive service, collision repair, and heavy-duty/diesel industry segments.

These numbers assume that 100 percent of post-secondary graduates in all three segments enter the automotive trades upon graduation. In fact, some of those graduates will not enter the industry at all. This shortage must be offset by high school CTE graduates directly entering the industry (skipping post-secondary

school), as well as other technician candidate sources, such as returning military or unskilled, untrained individuals to enter the transportation trades.

Why is it such a struggle?

Specific to the automotive industry, what are the struggles?

- Baby boomers (those people born between 1946 and 1964) are retiring and taking decades of skills and experience working in shops with them. There are about 76 million boomers in the United States, representing nearly 30 percent of the population.
- Educational programs are struggling to stay ahead of vehicle technology, especially in a two-year high school. But even post-secondary career technical education (CTE) programs often lag behind technologically. This is particularly true given the significant budget reductions

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that CTE programs have faced. Also, CTE programs have for years been struggling to find qualified instructors.

- More and more high school students are pressured to pursue 4-year college degrees instead of career readiness or trade skills programs, despite research that says students who take advanced CTE courses in high school see higher earnings.

What can be done about it?

In its research, the ASE Education Foundation found that 42 percent of the automotive CTE graduates (both high school and post-secondary), leave the transportation industry altogether within the first two years of employment.


What are some of the reasons, and where can the industry start to make improvements?

- **Low starting pay.** How are you paying your techs? It's common for techs to be paid in one of three ways: hourly, salary or flat rate. Because flat rate pays technicians by the specific job they perform, it benefits those employees who work quickly. Putting an entry-level technician on flat rate often results in them earning less than a living wage. Consider an hourly rate or salary for those technicians just starting out. In most states, entry-level auto service and collision techs make \$10-12 per hour, while the diesel and trucking industry pays \$18-22 per

hour for entry-level. You're not just competing against the shop down the street. You're competing against every segment that wants to hire that technician candidate.

- **Benefits.** Paying more may seem like a no brainer, but it's not always about the starting salary. Benefits are a major draw, so strongly consider health and dental benefits, 401K plans, established advancement opportunities and a career path.
- **The high cost of tools.** Consider a tool program where the employer provides tools for all starting employees to use at the shop with tool ownership retained by the company. Or, the shop can purchase a new tool set for employees when they start, and employees vest toward ownership in the toolbox as they reach goals and benchmarks. Expecting a new employee to spend thousands of dollars on tools from the start of their career just isn't feasible for most people, especially at entry-level pay rates.
- **Lack of sufficient training/mentoring.** One method that can dramatically improve retention is to better equip shops and dealerships with mentoring tool sets. According to the Spherion Emerging Workforce Study, those who receive mentoring at their place of employment are 77 percent more likely to stay with their employer. By improving mentoring practices, the probability of improved retention increases, with a goal of reducing the 42 percent attrition rate.
- **Bullying in the workplace.** Harassing and bullying behavior that may have once seemed acceptable and overlooked should have no place in today's shop. Take a hard look at your work areas and strengthen your HR policies if necessary. Remember, leaders in your shop set the example.
- **Non-automotive sectors are recruiting graduates from automotive-related career tech programs.** Graduates from your local auto service and collision CTE programs are great candidates for other industries, such as aviation, oil and gas, and wind energy. How can the automotive industry as a whole make the industry more attractive so that we aren't losing people to other industries? It's an important question and one that may not have an easy answer. Take some time to research what these industries are paying for employees with similar skill sets.

Start today

There isn't one solution to the technician shortage, and conversations about the reality of the situation are a great starting point. But this problem isn't going away, and just talking about it isn't going to change anything. It is going to take a commitment from everyone to strengthen and grow the industry. 

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POSITION YOURSELF FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Shop owners must be flexible and prepared to adapt to a changing industry environment

JOHN SHOEMAKER // Contributing Editor

Sustainability is the word I like to use when describing to shop owners what they must do to continue doing business in the collision industry. In my explanation, I try to illustrate how a shop owner must adapt to their environment to keep their business operating through future changes.

So, what does this really mean? The environment seen in some of today's shops is not an environment that will allow continued operation in the collision

industry, and shop owners cannot rest on the status quo — waiting to see what happens. Understand that status quo is not positioning yourself for sustainability, it's just treading water in a rising river.

The first step in positioning yourself for sustainability is to align your shop with the requirements identified in the Collision Industry Conference (CIC) Collision Repair Provider Definition. You must take a good, hard look at your environment — your business. This must be your immediate focus. As you review the

definition, you will find it focuses on OEM repair procedures and equipment, with a strong emphasis on training. You will find that the training mentioned will come from multiple resources: OEM, Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair (I-CAR), Automotive Management Institute (AMi) and others. Following the CIC definition will help you identify what needs to change to meet the expectations of our evolving industry.

To remain successful in our industry, OEM repair procedures must be the en-

tity that controls repairs in your facility. In the article “Achieving, maintaining OEM certifications will be key to sustainability” (ABRN.com/oemkey), I discuss how OEM certifications, as well as OEM procedures, are becoming more prevalent in our industry. While OEM procedures are not new, they have only been brought to the forefront in the last few years. Additionally, OEMs are making huge strides in directing customers to OEM-certified repair facilities. There are several vehicle manufacturers mandating that vehicles in their lease programs are only repaired at certified repair centers. If you are waiting to become OEM certified, you will be left behind and, sadly, once vehicle manufacturers reach their shop limit, you will be left out.

Acquiring OEM certifications is a painstaking, but important, step in positioning yourself for sustainability. With OEM certifications you become an authority on the repair processes required by the manufacturer for which you are certified. Learning how to review these processes and having the ability to document damages on a vehicle accurately is a must. I review this in “The need to re-program damage appraisers” (ABRN.com/reprogram) and “Documentation is key to communicating the collision repair process” (ABRN.com/document), explaining that repair operations must be described exactly as they are to be completed. This ensures the damage appraisal communicates effectively to all parties connected to the repair and allows you to take charge of the repair process by identifying each required step and documenting the steps individually through repair lines using the OEM repair procedures as justification.

As you learn to document the repair thoroughly and use repair procedures as justification, you will more than likely meet resistance from some parties involved in the repair process. As I covered in “Effective collision repair negotiation starts with education/training” (ABRN.com/negotiate), it is important that we

use this newly obtained authority with confidence and professionalism. Treating those in the repair process with mutual respect and using your knowledge to educate rather than criticize will often bring positive results. As we rethink the way we discuss repairs and use OEM repair processes as the source of information, you should be able to move forward with little or no debate. There is an adage, “Those with the most information win,” so keep that in mind as you position yourself for sustainability.

As I discuss in “Implementing non-negotiables can help set standards for your shop” (ABRN.com/setstandards), our environment is a much better place when people know what to expect. Setting standards based on your core values and not wavering allows the people around you to understand that your business is yours and you are in control. When your standards are “non-negotiable” you gain respect from your employees, those you do business with, and most of all, your customers. When your customers know that you will take a stand for what you believe in, you gain their trust, which positions you well in your strides towards sustainability. Being selective on what you consider non-negotiable and focusing on core principles and functions that always need to be performed a certain way prevents you from over managing your operation.

Once you reach this point, it is time to ensure that the public knows that you are different than the repair facilities around you. As I mentioned in “Do potential customers know your difference?” (ABRN.com/yourdifference), it is time to step back and take a look at your business to find those little differences you have in your business and capitalize on them through your marketing techniques. Make sure your marketing reflects your certifications, business model and customer satisfaction records. This is what will make you stand out among the competition, putting you in position to excel against the others.

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This article is worth .25 credit hours toward Automotive Management Institute (AMI) designation programs.

To receive credit, log in or set up a free “myAMi” account at ami.knowledgeanywhere.com. Once inside “myAMi,” search for “Position yourself for sustainability” or go to ABRN.com/positionnow.

The bottom line is you must take control of your business today and start adapting to the things we discussed to continue to be successful in our industry. Don’t use the excuse: I have DRPs; I must follow their guidelines. I agree most DRPs have stringent guidelines, and to stay on those programs your shop must be within certain parameters. However, that does not keep you from taking control of your business; review your DRP agreements to see what you can manage and focus on those points. I believe you will find there is enough flexibility to move past the status quo, positioning yourself for sustainability.

I will be facilitating an interactive discussion about the changes in the collision industry and how they affect shop owners, the need to adapt to these changes and the consequences if shop owners do not move past status quo at SEMA this year. Register for “Position yourself for sustainability — RD4” on Nov. 4 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at ABRN.com/positionyourself. 📍



JOHN SHOEMAKER is a business development manager for BASF North America Automotive Refinish Division and the former

owner of JSE Consulting.

john.a.shoemaker@basf.com

AV conversation should not exclude safety inspection

With social and technological trends, who's responsible?

During the discussions of autonomous vehicle (AV) legislation in the last Congress, several members of Congress raised concerns about who would be responsible for assuring that these vehicles would be maintained and safe for America's roads. Currently, only 15 states have vehicle safety inspection programs. With the 115th Congress' failure to move AV legislation, the issue has arisen again.

U.S. House and Senate policymakers asked that organizations interested in new vehicle technologies submit comments about what AV legislation should include. The Automotive Service Association emphasized the importance of vehicle safety inspection in a letter to the committees:

"As vehicles become increasingly sophisticated and the owner less attached and knowledgeable about their vehicle, ASA believes that vehicle safety inspection and maintenance will be less of a priority. Autonomous vehicles (AV) raise numerous issues related to vehicle safety including the day-to-day responsibility for monitoring important safety items on the vehicle, i.e. tires, lights, brakes, condition of the windshield, etc. States that allow AVs on their roads should also be required to have a state periodic motor vehicle safety inspection program in place."

In a recent study, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) noted three important trends for the automotive industry: technological, social and regulatory.

Technological includes autonomous driving, electrification, connectivity. Social includes urbanization, new way of working and sharing. Finally, the regulatory trend would involve city regulation and emissions standards. These trends should impact how federal, state and local policymakers view vehicle safety.

With increased ride-sharing, who's responsible for the maintenance and safety inspection of the vehicle? The majority of jurisdictions have no inspection or maintenance requirement. For anyone traveling around the country, ride share vehicles vary greatly in their condition for clients. What assurance will



STATES HAVE A MODEST HISTORY OF SUPPORT FOR VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTIONS UNLESS IT'S TIED TO A SIGNIFICANT FUNDING SOURCE.

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web-based consumer comments or less stars provide that the vehicle will be repaired?

The lack of federal AV legislation, and nothing set to move in the foreseeable future, puts much responsibility on the states and communities. Are cities equipped to assure ride share vehicle safety? States have a modest history of support for vehicle safety inspection unless it's tied to a significant funding source, i.e. highway funds. The National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) has already noted the importance of vehicle safety inspection in various initiatives.

In NHTSA's "Automated Driving Systems 2.0," federal regulators offered guidance to state and local jurisdictions for AVs. "Post-Crash ADS Behavior Entities engaging in testing or deployment should consider methods of returning ADSs to a safe state immediately after being involved in a crash... Additionally, entities are encouraged to have documentation available that facilitates the maintenance and repair of ADSs before they can be put back in service."

NHTSA's "Automated Vehicles 3.0" continued its boundaries of federal and state responsibilities. NHTSA publishes the "Uniform Guidelines

for State Highway Safety Programs" and highlights that "Each state should have a program for periodic inspection of all registered vehicles to reduce the number of vehicles with existing or potential conditions that may contribute to crashes or increase the severity of crashes that do occur, and should require the owner to correct such conditions." NHTSA is describing what we have today in only 15 state vehicle inspection programs. As ownership continues to shift to ride share and other programs, more responsibility will likely fall on local and state governments for vehicle safety post-manufacture. Any federal legislation that ignores this important responsibility is not fulfilling its duty to protect the motoring public. 🚗

ROBERT REDDING is the Automotive Service Association's Washington, D.C. representative. He has served as a member of several federal and state advisory committees involved in the automotive industry. rredding@reddingfirm.com



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North of the border

Canada's Certified Collision Care program helps shops achieve OEM certification

JAMES E. GUYETTE //

Contributing Editor



North-of-the-border body shops are benefiting from an automaker-approved repairer certification program. As the Canadian division of U.S.-based Assured Performance Network, more than 540 shops have already become members of the Certified Collision Care program since its 2016 entry into Canada's marketplace. The organization manages and administers Canadian OEM certification programs for Ford, Fiat Chrysler, Kia, Nissan, INFINITI, Toyota and Lexus.

"In a challenging and ever-changing industry, this helps us tremendously," says Chelsea Stebner, managing partner of Parr Auto Body in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. "Certified Collision Care is a great way for our facility to stay on the leading edge with the latest technology, training, tools and equipment. With a lot of the OEMs jumping on board the certification program, this is a clean, simple way to become a part of it."

As a Certified Collision Care member for three and a half years, "it was not difficult for us to qualify," says Stebner, referencing Parr's longtime emphasis on top quality service since its founding in 1952. "We are committed to providing our customers with excellence in all areas — our equipment and tooling, our technical skill levels and our customer experience," adds Tom Bissonnette, one of the partners at Parr.

With Parr's achievement of Certified Collision Care certification, "They represent the standard by which all other body shops are measured," according to Scott



Biggs, the CEO of Assured Performance who established the organization in 2004.

Headquartered in Laguna Hills, Calif., Assured Performance has an American membership of more than 2,521 shops with performance capabilities meeting the official collision repair standards of the participating U.S. OEMs.

"Without the collaborative approach of Certified Collision Care, Canadian repairers could have faced a challenge where different OEMs required a certain 'brand' of tool or equipment that performed the same function. It is difficult to carry all brands of tools and equipment," Stebner points out. "With the Certified Collision Care program, these redundancies are eliminated because the participating OEMs utilize a single set of core requirements that are not brand-specific, but instead rely on equipment output and technical specifications."

Stebner elaborates about how "we've worked hard to stay ahead of the curve in the collision repair industry. This official certification demonstrates that commitment to our customers. We take pride in our highly trained technicians who use

the latest tools and equipment to deliver a top-quality repair and the best customer service."

"Considering that fewer than 10 percent of Canada's approximately 4,000 body shops are able to meet the Certified Collision Care Certification criteria today, certified shops like Parr Auto Body deserve to be recognized for their achievements," says Leanne Jefferies, vice president of Canadian Operations at Certified Collision Care/Assured Performance. "Parr was a very early participant in the program."

She explains, "The right tools, equipment, training and facilities are critical to ensure the safety features of a vehicle are restored following an accident. As new model vehicles are being introduced that use lightweight high-strength materials and advanced technology, a proper repair according to manufacturer specification is even more important than ever to ensure the passenger safety and proper performance of the vehicle."

Certification steps include:

- Enrollment
- Business profile & online

assessment

- Score & evaluation
- Onsite audit
- Marketing tools are then provided upon official certification

“Our program’s unique approach will enable repairers to be ‘Certified Once and Recognized by Many’ — using a consistent turnkey system that eliminates redundancy in program requirements, repetitious inspections and unnecessary duplication of costs,” Jefferies says.

“The Certified Collision Care program has steadily added new OEM partners, and the network of Certified repairers continues to grow every day,” she notes. “These best-in-class repairers understand that OEM certification gives them a way to gain recognition and differentiate themselves in their market. Being aligned with the most powerful brands in the automotive industry, certified shops gain an ROI on the investment they have made in their business.”

Although Assured Performance offers a significant menu of business enhancement offerings in the U.S., the Canadian market’s inaugural entrance is initially focusing on the OEM certifications, with the proprietary ShopOps program being piloted at a limited amount of locations.

(Fully deployed in the U.S., ShopOps is described as an “electronic business ‘tool box’ filled with key features that help organize, improve and manage your body shop business operations.”)

Accelerating momentum

Certified Collision Care “follows the same joint-effort approach as Assured Performance does in the U.S.,” says Jefferies. “We manage and administer the OEM certification programs for well over half of the vehicles on the road today, and we expect additional OEMs to join our program in the future.”

Certified Collision Care is “managed in Canada, by Canadians,” she stresses, “and we provide the same services as Assured Performance — but in English and

French. Our shops work directly with the Canadian team to achieve and maintain certification.”

Benefits for certified shops as noted by the company include:

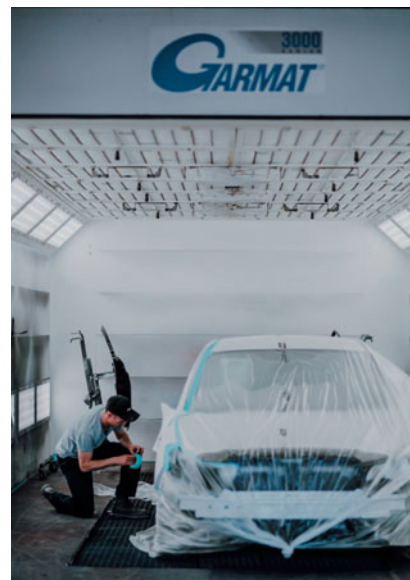
- Marketing tools, such as signage and OEM-certified logos, for use in marketing efforts and brand enhancement
- Multiple online consumer and insurer-facing shop locators, including those placed directly on OEM consumer websites
- OEM referrals through roadside assistance and OEM call centers
- Business improvement tools and best practices, now including (the piloted-in-Canada) ShopOps
- ShopOps provides a state-of-the-art repair documentation system and a robust customer relationship management system that allows consumers to set appointments through smart apps and online shop locators.

With having achieved national coverage, OEMs are now deploying new marketing initiatives aimed at educating consumers about the importance of selecting a certified repair facility, according to Jefferies. “We are receiving calls and emails from consumers every week who are looking for assistance to find a certified shop in their market,” she says. “As awareness grows, we will continue to see OEMs directing more customers to their networks.”

Elevating the industry

“The Certified Collision Care program is elevating the Canadian industry, driving more repairers to make the required investments in the tools, equipment and training necessary to repair vehicles safely to OEM specifications,” says Jefferies.

“Repairers in the Canadian market now understand the need for OEM certification and the many benefits it provides to their business to attract cars to their doors, both through OEM consumer referrals and having the ability to market their business as an OEM-certified col-



lision repair center. We are also seeing an increased focus on OEM certification from banner, franchise and large dealer groups,” she says. “This trend continues to accelerate, thanks in part to our efforts to educate shops about the investments needed to properly repair vehicles.”

The flat annual certification fee is \$2,950, regardless of how many OEM certifications a shop obtains.

“When a shop enrolls, we deliver a high level of support throughout the certification process. We invest a lot of time speaking to shops every day to provide coaching and assistance as they progress towards their ultimate goal of certification,” says Jefferies.

“The requirements can be challenging for shops, but having a dedicated partner to help really simplifies the process. We also work closely with auto dealers who provide sponsorship to facilities they are working with in their market, that they would like to see certified.”

For Paul Stella, Toyota Canada’s manager of Collision Repair & Refinish, the “Certified Collision Care existing resources help us manage our certified collision network.”

Certification “allows independent and dealer-owned collision repair facilities to meet the qualifications necessary to be

recognized by Kia Canada as a collision repair facility of choice for its customers," concurs Kia's John Stoitian, director of parts and after sales.

"The program will ensure that Kia owners can choose a certified collision repair provider that has the proper tools, equipment, training and facility required to repair their vehicle to OEM specifications while maintaining the vehicle's fit, finish, durability, functionality and safety," he says. "This is particularly important based upon the increasingly complex vehicle design and repair requirements of Kia vehicles."

Education keeping pace with change

Certified Collision Care also offers a Technical Institute and Community College certification program. As the first college to obtain Certified Collision Care certification within the program last

year, future Canadian technicians attending the post-secondary Saskatchewan Polytechnic institution are able to stay abreast of the latest repair techniques.

"As vehicle construction and design rapidly evolve, it is challenging for educational facilities to keep pace with change," says Jefferies. "This achievement demonstrates their high level of commitment to excellence in providing students with relevant, up-to-date automotive training."

Serving 28,000 students at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, along with an extensive lineup of distance education opportunities, the achievement underscores "the level and quality of training that Sask Polytech provides our auto body technician program students," says Dr. Larry Rosia, the school's president and CEO. "The OEM certification from Certified Collision Care emphasizes the world-

class education our students receive and will help to increase their job-readiness upon graduating."

To receive the certification, administrators followed the same rigorous process as collision repair facilities in meeting the program's requirements. During the certification process, all compliance is documented and then verified on-site by an inspector.

Rosia reports that Sask Polytech offers a one-year certificate and provides the in-school portion of apprenticeship training for the auto body technician curricula. The courses "provide students with a solid foundation in the knowledge and skills required to work in motor vehicle body repair and refinishing." ■



JAMES E. GUYETTE is a long-time contributing editor to *ABRN*, *Aftermarket Business World* and *Motor Age* magazines.

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Hanvey addresses need for data access, consumer choice

AUTO CARE ASSOCIATION INITIATIVE AIMS TO GET INDUSTRY MORE INVOLVED

KRISTA MCNAMARA //

Content Channel Director

Vehicle data and access is a very hot topic in today's industry, as advanced technologies in today's cars are hindering the independent repair sector from servicing their customers.

ABRN spoke with Bill Hanvey, president and CEO of the Auto Care Association, which has been pushing a movement to get consumers and the industry up to speed on the realities of vehicle data access and what everyone can do to ensure consumer privacy and choice.

The Auto Care Association has been driving the "Your Car. Your Data. Your Choice." movement. Tell us about the initiative and the response you have seen thus far.

I want to point out initially that although the Auto Care Association might be driving this, this is an entire industry initiative — whether you are a body shop, independent repair facility or a parts manufacturer — this initiative impacts everyone within the industry. What we are trying to do is garner support, recognition and drive within our industry to be able to make the consumer and our legislators, whether at the state or the federal level, aware of the fact that consumer choice is being threatened by the fact that the car manufacturers are beginning to shut us out of wirelessly transmitted data from the vehicle.

Why is consumer choice and vehicle data ownership so important to

the independent aftermarket?

Seventy percent of the repairs made in today's marketplace outside of warranty are performed in our industry in the independent repair facility. Whether it is an independent body shop or an independent service station on the corner of Elm and Main. The reason for the 70 percent is that the consumers choose that particular channel. They like their local shop. The local shop is more convenient; the local shop is less expensive than the dealership. We want to ensure that that choice of being able to choose your local mechanic is still in place not just today, but five years from now, 10 years from now, ad infinitum. That's what this all boils down to. Is that if the car manufacturers have complete monopoly over vehicle data they will effectively shut out our entire industry from being able to do diagnostics and those things that are necessary in order to fix the vehicle.

The issue of vehicle data ownership seems relatively new, but can you talk about the impact already being seen in today's market?

This is not a new initiative. As many may know, we passed the Right to Repair Act in Massachusetts in 2012. The thing that the Right to Repair Act did do was allow us access to that port, the OBDII port, underneath the steering wheel, so that you can plug in your individual scan tool and find out engine codes or diagnostic codes. Well, that piece of legislation did not support wirelessly transmitted vehicle data, which is taking place on today's vehicles. We have to be able

to ensure that the same right to access that vehicle data through the OBDII port is also preserved for that wireless transmission of data. We are beginning to see shops and beginning to hear reports of shops unable to get diagnostics codes wirelessly or having to pay exorbitant prices for that diagnostic data.

Vehicle data has been dubbed the next great privacy issue. Can you explain what this mean?

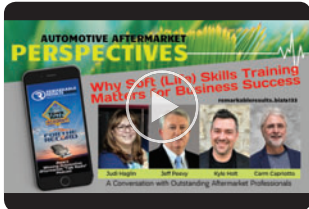
Several months ago, there was a quote by the Ford CEO saying that in the future, the sale of vehicle data will surpass new car sales in terms of revenue contribution to Ford Motor Company. Obviously, the car manufacturers see a tremendous opportunity to take that data that you are generating, that you own, that you control, and turning it into a profit center. And our ask is simple. We want to be able to have the consumers control that data, whether it is diagnostically or personal data. We want to ensure the consumer is in control of that data.

Where do we stand legislatively on this issue?

We are approaching it from two ways. The first is an amendment to the Right to Repair Act. We are expanding the scope to the initial Right to Repair Act to include wirelessly transmitted data. So, we have legislation pending in committee in Massachusetts. We have more than 60 sponsors of the bill, and we are also taking a look at a ballot question for the voters to be able to say, "Yes, I want to be the individual responsible for my

>> CONTINUES ON PAGE 38

WATCH + LEARN



The value of soft skills training

ABRN.COM/SoftSkills



The fight for vehicle data access

ABRN.COM/AccessToData



The importance of marketing, relationship building

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DETAILS: The technician pulled DTC P0171. The fuel trims verified that the fuel system was lean. The technician introduced propane into the intake manifold. The oxygen sensors and fuel trims responded correctly.

CONFIRMED REPAIR: Since the fuel management system appeared to be working correctly, the technician decided to replace the aftermarket MAF sensor with an OEM (DENSO) MAF sensor. He cleared the Keep Alive Memory and performed the appropriate

drive cycle to insure the repair was complete. The MIL did not come back on. Problem solved by an OEM part.

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NOVEMBER 5

Collision Industry Conference
Renaissance Las Vegas Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

NOVEMBER 5-8

SEMA 2019
Las Vegas Convention Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

DECEMBER 3-6

Automechanika Shanghai
National Exhibition & Convention Center
Shanghai, China

JANUARY 15-16

Collision Industry Conference
Hilton Palm Springs
Palm Springs, California

JANUARY 27-30

Heavy Duty Aftermarket Week
The Gaylord Texan Resort
Grapevine, Texas

MAY 3-6

ACPN Knowledge Exchange Conference
Hyatt Regency Seattle
Seattle, Washington

>> CONTINUES FROM PAGE 36

vehicle's data." We should have results in terms of success in Massachusetts by the fall of 2020. We are also pursuing a federal path through a coalition that we are a part of called the U.S. Vehicle Data Access Coalition. And that is an initiative of many like groups. It includes consumer privacy groups, the Auto Care Association, rental car companies, ATA, the Motor Equipment and Manufacturers Association and other like associations who see the threat of vehicle data monopolization by the car manufacturers to free choice and the free economy. So we are pursuing legislation federally, we are drafting a bill and we are in the process of acquiring a sponsor for that bill.

How can the industry get involved in supporting this initiative?

That's what this campaign is all about. Our industry employs 4.6 million people. We contribute more than \$400 billion to the economy. Telematics could be deemed an initiative or threat — depending on the way that you look at it — but, if done right, it will be a tremendous benefit for our industry. But we have to rally our industry, we have to collectively speak as distributors, as shop owners, as parts manufacturers, and really amplify that voice of 4.6 million people to say that this is unacceptable. As a consumer I want to be able to control and access my data as I see fit, and we as an industry are not going to take this lying down. We are going to fight at the state level, at the federal level, and in the local trenches to make sure everybody is aware of this initiative and joins. We also have

tools available for the consumer and the industry through yourcaryourdata.org. There is a toolkit for the industry at www.autocare.org/telematics/. You can download information; pass it on to your customers and make them aware of the initiative. Have them sign the petition, which is on the website as well. That really gets lawmakers' attention, when they get an email from the consumer saying, "I want to be able to control and access my vehicle's data."

Look, we need to all become educated on this issue, we need to use the tools that are available. Now is the time, as not only part of our industry, but as Americans, to get involved, be part of the political process and stand up and say this is unacceptable and I am going to fight for this right to control my own data. 📧



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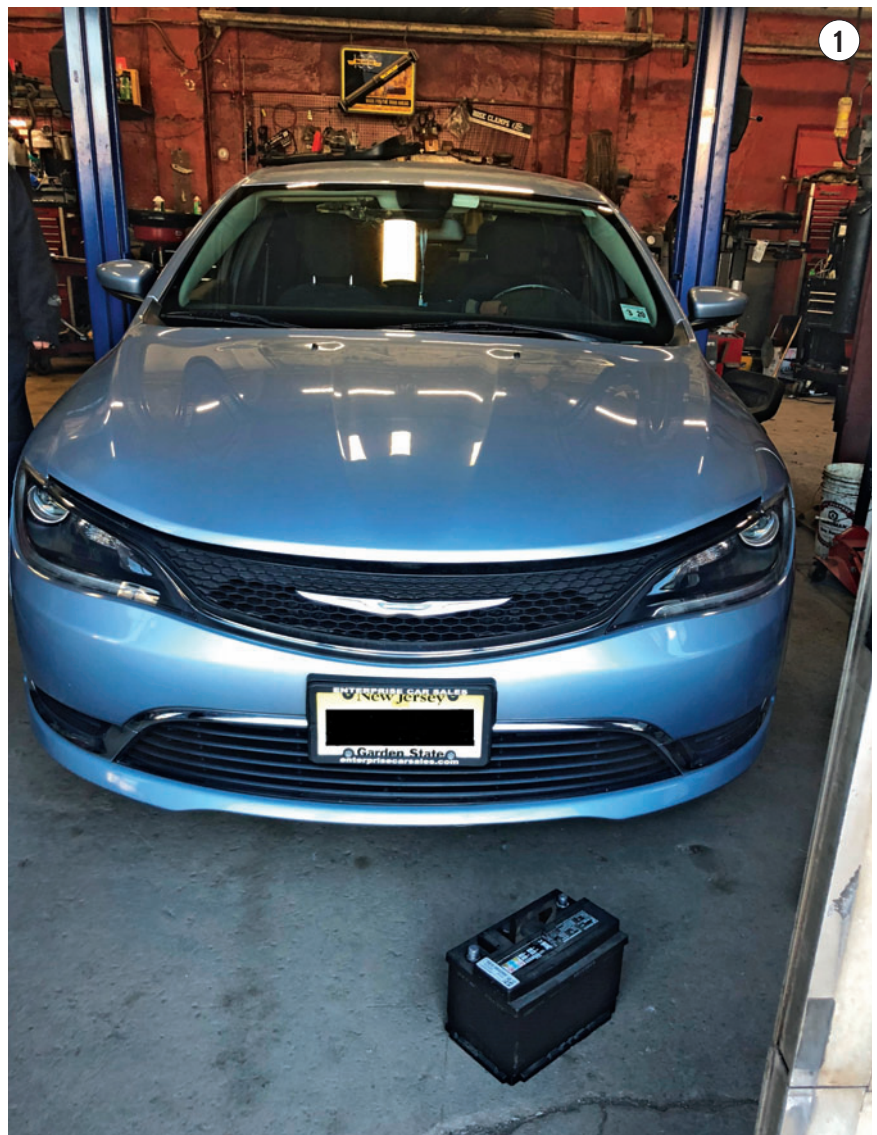
A CHRYSLER ENCOUNTERED A MEMORY ISSUE WHEN IT WAS UNABLE TO RETAIN SYSTEM INFORMATION DURING A POWER CYCLE. SEE HOW WE TACKLED THE PROBLEM.

JOHN ANELLO // Contributing Editor

I was called to a body shop on a 2015 Chrysler 200 with a 2.4 L engine with an automatic transmission (**Figure 1**). The vehicle was involved in a minor collision and was moved around the shop to different bays during the repair process. The vehicle encountered an issue in which it would no longer go into drive or reverse and it was stuck in the neutral position. There was no shifter handle in the vehicle, but rather a knob on the center console that was turned to select a gear. The shop did not know what caused this condition during their repair process and were not too quick to condemn the transmission. It was at this point that I was hired for my diagnostic services.

When I arrived at the shop, I entered the vehicle and quickly observed a few lights on the dash with the vehicle running. The Check Engine, ABS and the Electronic Parking Brake lights were all illuminated (**Figure 2**). I even noticed the selector knob was indicating that the vehicle was in neutral (**Figure 3**). When I tried to select drive or reverse, it would not engage, so it was at this point I decided to hook up my Chrysler Wi-Tech Scan Tool to make sense of it all.

The Wi-Tech uses Topology layout for the controller network. This is very helpful to the technician, because it gives you a quick visual result of what is going on in the vehicle. The Topology map is always live and will show all control module icons in blue if there are no codes, yellow



if there are codes and red if the controller is inoperative. The gray icons indicate that the controller is an option and is not used on the vehicle. Their screen showed 17 active controllers on board

with seven of them indicating codes present or stored. What is also helpful on the screen is the fact that the controllers are linked by network lines they share, and the lines are color coded for the types of



2

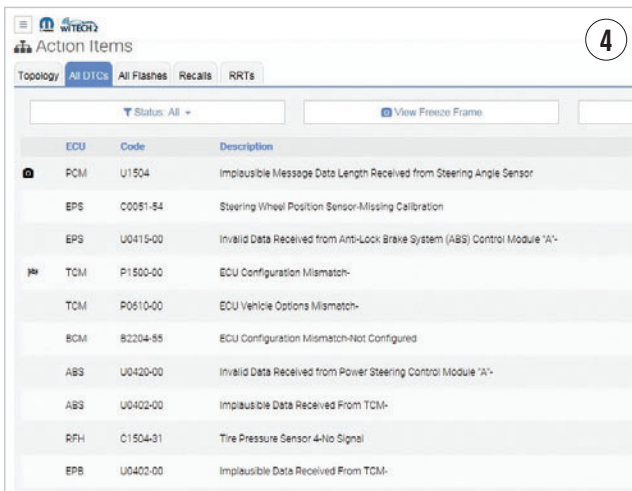
networks they are linked to. In this case, light blue is CAN Bus IHS and black is CAN Bus C. Because this scan tool is online, a green flash icon is placed over the TCM icon to indicate an available update for the transmission control module. As you can see, the Wi-Tech Tool was built with the technician in mind.

By selecting the “All DTCs” tab, a screen comes up with the codes for the seven controllers (**Figure 4**). This is where you need to decide what codes relate to the transmission engagement issue and how the problem is being resonated through the network. The Radio Frequency Hub Code can be ignored because it is a code for a tire pressure sensor fault relating to a signal output error. The transmission had codes P1500 and P0610 for configuration and vehicle option mismatch, yet the shop never replaced the TCM in their repair process. The TCM vehicle information somehow got corrupted. This was also resonated in the body control module, which stored a code B2204 for a module being corrupted on the network. The body shop did explain to me how the battery on the vehicle went very low and they constantly had to jump start the vehicle, so they ended up putting a new battery in it. Apparently, this TCM had a non-volatile memory issue in which it was unable to retain system info during a power cycle. It suffered an automotive amnesia attack that rendered it inoperative to perform critical tasks to propel the car forward or backward, so it chose to enter a default protection mode. The fix here was to reconfigure the TCM with its lost information and put it back to factory specifications.



3

I proceeded to the BCM PROXI status screen, and the TCM definitely fell out of alignment with the other controllers on-board. I next went to a special Guided Diagnostics menu in the Wi-Tech tool to perform a PROXI configuration alignment and configuration restoration of the transmission control module (**Figure 5**). Once both of these procedures were done, I was now able to switch it back into park (**Figure 6**). I tried putting



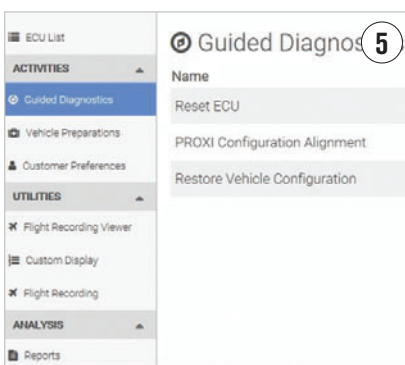
ECU	Code	Description
PCM	U1504	Implausible Message Data Length Received from Steering Angle Sensor
EPS	C0051-84	Steering Wheel Position Sensor-Missing Calibration
EPS	U0415-00	Invalid Data Received from Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) Control Module 'A'
TCM	P1500-00	ECU Configuration Mismatch-
TCM	P0610-00	ECU Vehicle Options Mismatch-
BCM	B2204-85	ECU Configuration Mismatch-Not Configured
ABS	U0420-00	Invalid Data Received from Power Steering Control Module 'A'
ABS	U0402-00	Implausible Data Received From TCM-
RFH	C1504-31	Tire Pressure Sensor 4-No Signal
EPB	U0402-00	Implausible Data Received From TCM-

the vehicle into reverse and drive, and the transmission engaged in both gears without any issues. I did, however, alert the shop that there was a transmission update that the owner of the vehicle must be aware of. This would benefit all involved in case the customer came back with a transmission issue unrelated to the accident.

My problems were not over because now I still had codes in the engine, ABS, electronic power steering and emergency brake control modules all resonating an issue with the steering angle sensor. When the vehicle battery went very low, the vehicle also lost the calibration of the steering angle sensor, so I had to go into the electronic power steering menu to relearn the steering angle sensor. There is certain criteria that must be met prior to performing this procedure. You must perform it on a flat surface with the steering wheel in center position and the front tires pointing straight ahead. This procedure also calibrates the yaw sensor, so this is why having the vehicle on a flat surface is important. Once I performed this task, I was able to clear the entire vehicle and everything was back to normal with no parts needed. It is amazing what a scan tool can perform when you can access the trouble codes stored in a vehicle and understand how to effectively use your tool to correct them.

All of this could have been avoided if the shop took extra

precautions to make sure the battery was properly maintained while the vehicle was in their possession. If a battery is simply disconnected for repairs and then later reconnected, the vehicle may have a fighting chance not



to lose onboard learned procedures or configured information stored in certain modules. It is a problem when an electrical system is extremely powered down during a slow cranking condition in which the battery power is not sufficient enough to start the vehicle. Doing this will seal the fate to lose a lot of non-volatile memories within the controllers on the networks.

There are quite a few manufacturers out there, such as BMW and Mercedes, that will not allow a vehicle to be cranked if the voltage on the battery falls too low. This is to protect the non-volatile memory functions of the controllers, and it can easily be mistaken for a starter relay or neutral switch fault. Manufacturers don't want a vehicle to lose all learned functions, such as ABS steering angle sensor, engine idle learn, SRS passenger occupant seat weight, camera/radar calibrations or stored configuration files in critical control modules.

It would be wise to invest in a battery maintainer to put on the vehicle that's held in your possession for the long-term. If you're going to start up a vehicle with a known low battery condition, you may want to put a booster pack on it to prevent the extremely low cranking condition from happening. You also may think twice now about leaving the key in the On position to listen to the vehicle tunes in the car while doing simple work on it. That very low battery cranking issue might just come back and bite you. I'm hoping this story hits home with a lot of techs out there and has enhanced what you know or don't know. 📡



JOHN ANELLO owns Auto Tech on Wheels in northern New Jersey, which is a mobile diagnostic service for 1,700 shops, providing technical assistance and remote programming. He is also a nationally known trainer.
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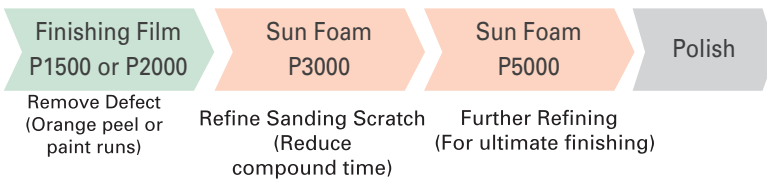
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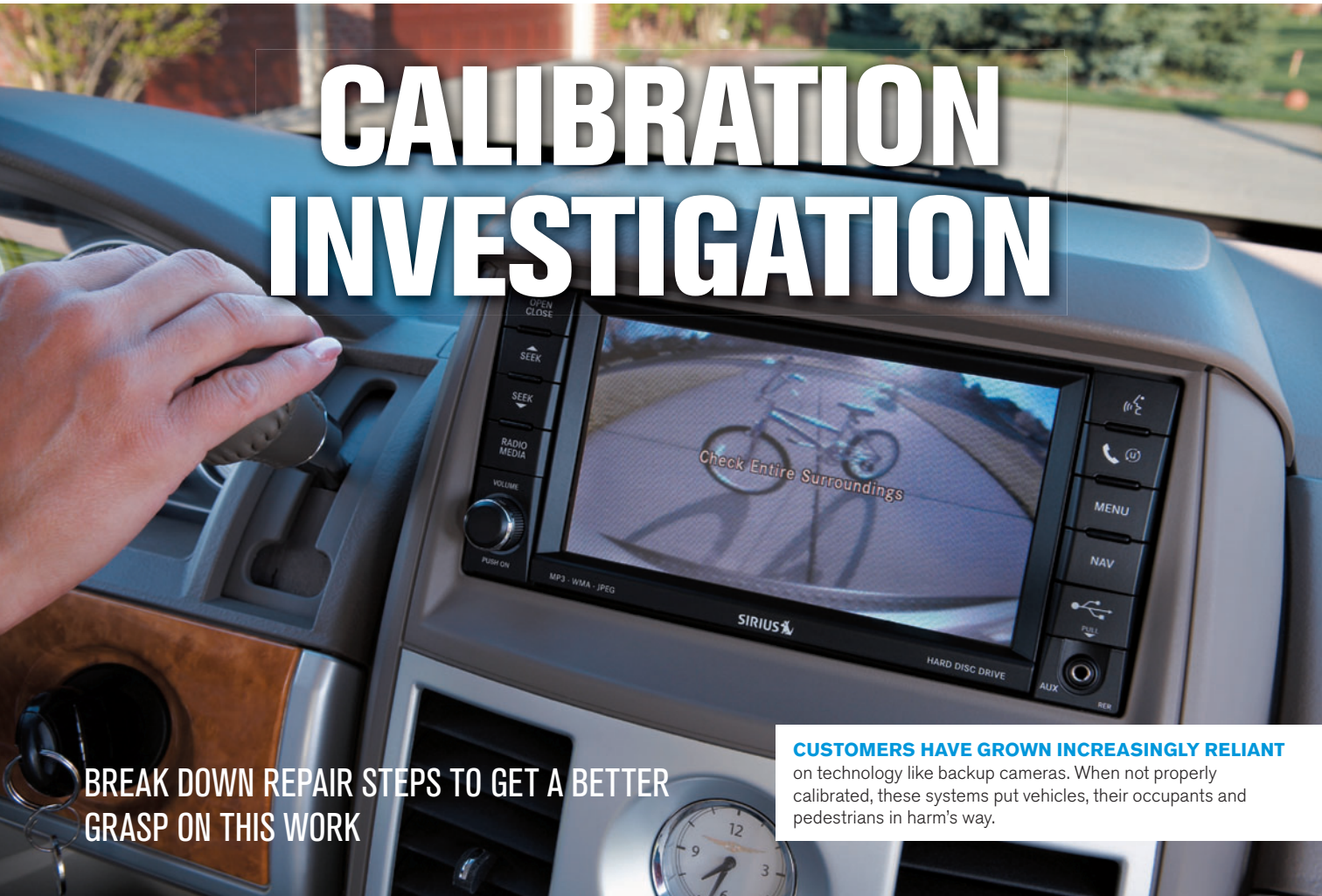
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CALIBRATION INVESTIGATION



BREAK DOWN REPAIR STEPS TO GET A BETTER GRASP ON THIS WORK

CUSTOMERS HAVE GROWN INCREASINGLY RELIANT

on technology like backup cameras. When not properly calibrated, these systems put vehicles, their occupants and pedestrians in harm's way.

TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

An old saying declares that “football is a game of inches.” Replace “football” with “collision repair” and “game” with “job” and the statement is still true. You also could swap out “inches” with “millimeters” and the statement is just as accurate. Exact measurements are one of the keys to a proper, safe repair job.

These measurements go well beyond where you attached parts. They’re also at the core of proper calibrations.

Nowhere is this truer and arguably more of an issue than with the cameras — especially the backup camera — on

today’s vehicles. A number of repairers have raised this issue with *ABRN*. Randy Drury, owner of Full Service Auto Stop in Houston believes there are two chief reasons for difficulty recalibrating these cameras. One, lack of training and experience, and two, failure to follow the OEM repair steps to the letter.

“I call it death by degrees,” says Drury. “When you’re calibrating anything, you have to follow the repair instructions exactly. I think there’s too many folks flying through this work to get it done quickly and ignoring things like checking the tire pressure so the vehicle is sitting right and especially working in an area where bright shop lights aren’t distorting the image.”

With so many motorists relying on accurate backup and other cameras to safely move their vehicles, a poor job here can have some significant consequences. Drury says shops could do themselves and their customers a huge favor by reviewing the steps for this work with their techs well beforehand to point out steps they may be overlooking and to better organize the repair plan.

What follows are the OEM repair steps for recalibrating the cameras for popular GM products. They’re reformatted here to help shops better focus on some vital, small details that can make a huge difference between an insufficient and quality repair.

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Calibrating the cameras on a 2019 Cadillac CTS

Note: This is the calibration process for the Surround Vision Camera System. When the Video Processing Control Module is replaced, calibration must be performed.

If the following occurs, calibration is recommended but not required:

- If a camera is replaced
- If mirrors or fascia are replaced, removed or physically adjusted.

Video Processing Control Module: What you need to know

The calibration procedure involves having the Video Processing Control Module learn new cameras and their positions. The calibration is performed automatically by the Video Processing Control Module.

A new Video Processing Control Module will have built-in default values for camera learn. However, the Video Processing Control Module will automatically calibrate in order to adapt to the vehicle.

Setting the stage

Prepare the work area and the camera by attending to the following:

- Properly inflate all tires.
- Place the vehicle on a level surface.
- Fold out all the mirrors.
- Wipe the camera lens clean.
- Interfering objects or glare from overhead lighting will fail an alignment. Make sure all are removed, and the lighting is either lowered or turned off.

- All points of access to the inside of the vehicle must be closed, including hood.
- Note again that if any one of the cameras on the Surround Vision Camera System is replaced, the displayed image may not be correctly stitched due to a change in the location or orientation of the camera. The only way to correct an incorrectly stitched image is to perform the calibration procedure.

Calibration background information

Before beginning the calibration steps, note all of the following:

1. The image will be slightly distorted



PHOTO:GM MEDIA

THE STEPS FOR CALIBRATING THE CAMERAS on GM vehicles such as the Cadillac CTS are remarkably similar, but there typically will be some significant differences between models.

- at all times since the camera(s) lens is a fish-eye lens meant to capture as much as possible.
2. If calibration does not start automatically or if manual initialization is desired, calibration can be initiated by selecting Video Processing Control Module Camera Learn in the scan tool.
3. The left side of the screen displays where the EL-51372 Camera Calibration Mat should be located for each step. The right side of the display is the view from the camera that is being learned during that step.

Mat setup and scan tool guidelines

Note: Diagnostic aids must be followed prior to calibration

To set up the calibration mat and use the scan tool properly, follow all these guidelines until calibration is complete:

- Vehicle must be ignition ON or Vehicle ON.
- Follow the on-screen instructions with regards to EL-51372 camera mat placement.
- The Camera Calibration Mat location is critical. If the image displayed is heavily distorted, the mat position was not correct. For correct mat location, refer to the box EL-51372 came in. Place the mat 50 cm from the vehicle when per-

forming calibration or camera learn. For Fore/Aft alignment, place the mat so the distance from the closest edge of the center square to the bumper is 70 cm.

- The Camera Calibration Mat must be as flat as possible. Wrinkles in the mat will cause a distorted view for the camera.
- An exclamation point (!) appearing on the radio display indicates the camera learn was not completed or there was an error. To clear, press Retry.
- At any point where the calibration is stuck and radio display does not show any camera images, click Cancel from the scan tool learn screen to resolve the issue and return to the previous learn position.
- If at any point in the calibration procedure the alignment process is interrupted, clicking Retry from the scan tool learn screen will cancel the current learn process and the procedure can be restarted.
- Do not click Finalize prior to step 7 in the calibration steps.

Sequence of Camera Alignment

Front Cameras Alignment Learn — Captures an image at Position E

Rear Camera Alignment Learn — Captures an image at Position F

Calibration steps

1. Using the scan tool, select the Front



PHOTO: DODGE MEDIA

TECHNOLOGY LIKE CAMERAS ARE typically part of more advanced vehicle safety systems. Understanding how all these components work together can aid in your knowledge of calibration.

- Camera Alignment Learn OR Rear Camera Alignment Learn to calibrate.
2. Click Initiate on the scan tool learn screen. This starts the calibration process.
 3. The radio display will show the desired EL-51372 camera calibration mat position.
 - Note:** Mat must be flat on the floor
 4. Place the EL-51372 camera mat in the position shown on the display. Use the box EL-51372 came in as a ruler to align the mat with the vehicle correctly.
 - Note:** In an event of an error, click the Retry button to reset the image and try a new capture
 5. Once the mat is correctly positioned, click Capture on the scan tool learn screen to capture the image.
 - If a red "X" is displayed, correct the EL-51372 camera mat position.
 - If a green checkmark is displayed, the image was accepted.
 6. Leave the EL-51372 camera mat in that position until the camera display prompts for it to be moved to the next position or if calibration is complete.
 7. Once the last camera image has been captured, click Finalize on the scan tool learn screen. This completes the learn. Finalize is the very last step since it saves all the data from the alignment.

Error codes during alignment

Error codes: 0101 Front Camera; 0103 Front Camera; 0201 Right Camera; 0203 Right Camera; 0301 Rear Camera; 0303 Rear Camera; 0401 Left Camera; 0403 Left Camera

Cause: Lighting issue, obstructed view of target, target position out of range, poor camera installation

Possible repair: Correct lighting, reposition target, verify camera correctly installed and clean

Error codes: 0102 Front; 0202 Right; 0302 Rear; 0402 Left

Cause: Lighting issue, obstructed view of target, target position out of range

Possible repair: Correct lighting, reposition target, verify camera is clean

Error codes: 0104 Front; 0204 Right; 0304 Rear; 0404 Left

Cause: Camera position incorrect

Possible repair: Correct camera position

Error codes: 0120 Front; 0220 Right; 0320 Rear; 0420 Left

Cause: NTSC error detected

Possible repair: Verify camera electrical connection

Error codes: FFF0 Passenger Door; FFF1 Left Rear Door; FFF2 Right Rear Door; FFF3 Driver Door; FFF4 Trunk; FFF5 Hood; FFF6 Liftglass

Cause: Hood, door, liftgate, trunk or other part of car is OPEN

Possible repair: Close all doors, hood, liftgate and trunk

Final step: Test drive

To allow the Video Processing Control Module to complete calibration more quickly, drive the vehicle. Ideal conditions to reduce calibration time include:

- All moving points of vehicle access (doors, trunk/liftgate, fuel door, hood, etc.) must be closed.
- Drive the vehicle on a reasonably flat and straight roadway for at least 0.3 miles.
- Then drive the vehicle speed at speeds of 6-19 mph.
- Keep the steering wheel angle less than 0.5 degrees.
- Vehicle should not be within 5 feet (1.5 meters) of a curb or roadside
- Test in dry weather, preferably with a cloudy but bright sky.

The vehicle should be, by all counts, in proper working order now as far as the cameras are concerned.

Consider exactly what this repair involved: Staging the vehicle in the right format, in a flat, properly lit area; setting up the mat as instructed; and then using the scan tool to help direct the calibration steps. None of this should be complicated at all, and yet this repair can become a difficult chore if a shop doesn't give the full instructions the attention they need.

One other important point to note here is that this procedure tends to be very similar from one model to another within the same brand though with key exceptions such as the sequence of camera alignment. In other words, never take for granted the details even after you're familiar with the work.

Do all that, and you'll handle every calibration task every time. Those wins are all a matter of inches, millimeters, degrees and so forth. 📏



TIM SRAMCIK has written for *ABRN* and sister publications *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World* for more than a decade. tsramcik@yahoo.com



PROCUREMENT POSSIBILITIES

ONLINE PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS COULD BE HELPING YOUR SHOP TODAY.
SHOP WISELY WITH THIS INFORMATION.

TIM SRAMCIK // Contributing Editor

An interesting thing happened a decade ago when a number of online parts procurement systems hit the market. Even though these products were designed to make ordering more ef-

ficient and parts less costly, a large portion of repairers pushed back.

With shops, insurers, MSOs, vendors and OEMs all jockeying for market share, little wonder that anything new involving all these parties would leave many shops wary. When State Farm began requiring its Select Service shops to use

the procurement service Parts Trader, a number of repairers spoke out, declaring that more repair decisions were being forced from them and the service performed poorly.

Change doesn't come easy in this industry. Still, online parts procurement providers have weathered this storm,



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DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT PROCUREMENT vendors with questions or problems. Even the most intuitive, easy-to-use systems can have features you might be missing.

rolling out upgraded services they believe can help create the best mix of OEM, aftermarket and salvage parts that can be delivered efficiently to shops with a notable cost savings.

Could these services be right for your shop?

They certainly have their fans, including some of the most successful shops and MSOs working today. If you haven't explored the entire procurement market, now is probably a good time to start. With potential advantages like shorter cycle times, better products and lower costs, you might want to get into the game. Here's what you need to know about these services, along with the steps you should take when deciding which provider(s) to add to your business today.

Know the players

Online parts procurement systems all function essentially the same way. After a shop creates the estimate, it exports a copy to the system (or multiple systems), which then provides a list of available parts, prices and vendors. The shop then either selects the parts it wants (based on price, location and reputation of the



PHOTO: COLLISIONLINK

EFFICIENCIES DELIVERED BY ONLINE PARTS SYSTEMS can give you more time to spend on other business areas like customer service.

vendor, etc.) or signs off on the parts mix created by the system.

There are a number of available systems to choose from. Your local shop association and vendors are good places to start to build a full list. The best-known, largest systems include:

CollisionLink – (www.collisionlink-shop.com) Built by OEConnection, CollisionLink is designed to bring more OE

parts into shops by matching parts on repair estimates to discounted or competitively-priced OE parts (thereby making OE parts a more attractive option). CollisionLink matches estimates to "exclusive" parts programs from 13 different manufacturers (including GM, Ford, Chrysler, Honda, Toyota, Nissan and Mercedes-Benz). The company also matches parts from every available brand and model.



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TRACK THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE SYSTEMS closely to see which ones provide the best benefits for your shop. Get multiple people involved, including estimators, parts personnel and management.

After an estimate is imported into its system, CollisionLink provides a shop a list of available OE options from preferred vendors the shop selects, along with their prices. The system also displays the price an insurer will pay for a non-OE version. CollisionLink is supported by dealers and is free to shops, along with any training or support.

PartsTrader – (www.partstrader.us.com) Billing itself as the only auto parts market bringing together OEM, aftermarket, remanufactured, specialist and recycled part suppliers, PartsTrader provides options from all these sources “minutes after” it receives the estimate.

Note: PartsTrader and OEC currently are working on an integration to enable quote requests and orders originating from PartsTrader to be processed in CollisionLink. PartsTrader says this integration will be available soon.

OPS (www.OPSTRAX.com) – OPS is designed to allow shops to source, order and track parts with just “one click,” reducing re-keying and data entry. The company promises quick turn-around times and states that it is the only end-to-end solution provider. OPS does business with some of the largest MSOs and parts

provider networks in the country.

uParts (www.uParts.com) — One of the newest providers (launched nationally in 2015), uParts creates what it calls the uParts Bundle, the “best mix” of OEM, aftermarket and LKQ parts that are sourced for a particular repair order/estimate.

OE leverage

Twenty years ago, a war raged across the repair industry over the use of aftermarket parts. An influx of cheap aftermarket products, many from Southeast Asia, had shops fuming over quality and the fact that the insurer was pressing them to use these products. Much of this antipathy has dissipated over the years. Part of the reason for that has been efforts by OEs to make their offerings more competitive.

Online parts providers are leveraging this movement. Tapping into special discounts and other promotions is the bread and butter of CollisionLink. GM, in particular, has made a big push for more sales by pairing programs like MyPriceLink, which offers up-to-the-minute pricing (Ford is now part of MyPriceLink) and Bump 2.0, a conquest program aimed at offering steep discounts to “bump” aftermarket parts off a repair

order. MyPriceLink and Bump 2.0 both are incorporated in CollisionLink.

Other providers also are concentrating on OE solutions. TraxPod, available through OPS, provides instant notifications on parts available for conquest or incentive pricing with a shop’s preferred suppliers. Manufacturers working with TraxPod include Ford, Hyundai, Infiniti, Lexus and Volkswagen. Auto Parts Bridge (www.autopartsbridge.com) offers price matching for parts from Toyota, Hyundai, Kia and Lexus. It also provides shops with access to all dealer information, including illustrations, VIN-based color-code filtering and exact part identification. Shops additionally can view all clips, fasteners and additional components not listed in many estimating systems to further ensure order accuracy.

Make a move: Five steps to take when selecting an online parts procurement system

While online parts system providers declare that their products offer many of the same features and benefits, there are some important differences. Many of these you won’t encounter until you become familiar with the system. Fac-

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tors such as the area of the country where you work, size of your operation and the types of vehicles you typically see can have a big impact on what these systems ultimately can provide. Selecting the system(s) that will work best for you takes some time and due diligence. Use the following five steps when making your decision to buy in.

1. Decide what outcome you want.

Looking to use more OE parts? Cut part costs across the board? Get parts sooner? Build efficiencies with fewer steps? Reduce inaccuracies? You'll want to know which of these benefits is most important since systems can focus more on certain order aspects. Also consider that you may not want to limit yourself to one system. Many shops, including some of the most successful ones in the country, opt for multiple systems since they want to look at multiple parts solutions.

Mark Newborough, owner of MN Collision in San Francisco, says his shop uses three systems after each proved its value during trial runs. "It can be a little tricky working with multiple part offers, but we like the setup because our estimators learned pretty quickly where they would see the best deals," he says. "That's probably not going to be the case with every shop."

Shane Thredgold, an estimator at Valet Auto Body in Draper, Utah, says his shop similarly utilizes three systems. Typically, it uses CollisionLink for most OE parts then turns to TraxPod for Nissan parts and Auto Parts Bridge for Toyotas.

2. Take each system for a test drive. CollisionLink and other systems are available free. Regardless of which you opt to investigate, try each out for at least 90 days to get a better sense of what it will provide. Make sure your estimators and parts department are open to change. Being able to fax or phone familiar vendors (which some surveys show nearly half the industry still opts for), might provide comfortable familiarity, but could be cheating your shop out of

a significant benefit. Note that some or many of these vendors could still be available through an online system. Also, seek referrals. Ask other shops what system(s) they utilize and why.

3. Record results. Monitor results (costs, cycle times, accuracy, etc.) from each system to see how your shop is benefitting and where. Get estimators, parts personnel and management involved

since this chore can be onerous and results will show up throughout the shop.

4. Work with providers. Have questions or difficulties with a system? Don't hesitate to contact customer support. As with any software product, these systems can take time to learn to use to their fullest, and sometimes need adjustments. Support personnel can help fix some of these issues. Also, companies that deliver these products usually are in search of customer feedback to guide them when designing upgrades. Your insights can help make a product benefitting your shop even better, which makes your business better.

"We've found that they're glad to hear from us when we've had problems," says Newborough. "I don't believe we've had any issues that took longer than 15 minutes to resolve."

5. Don't forget the human element. Having systems that can locate and order the parts you want quickly and easily with minimal steps can free your shop from some time-intensive tasks. Even better, they can take over management of this work, freeing up your time to concentrate on customer service and other business areas. This doesn't mean



PHOTO: COLLISIONLINK

SYSTEMS LIKE COLLISIONLINK are designed to bring more OE parts into your shop using special discounts and competitive pricing.

you should entirely mechanize and depersonalize this work. Maintain the human element.

Regularly touch base with estimators and your parts department to see how a system is working and where improvement could be made. Keep in touch with vendors as well. You may strictly be dealing with each other online, but occasional phone calls and other contact steps may be necessary to complete an order.

Newborough notes, "Collision repair is always going to be a people business. It's really great that we can automate a lot of our work, but we have to remember that these are our shops, and our customers and partners are our family and friends. We discovered when we started looking into these systems, they were much easier to adopt when we could put a face on them and experience some human interaction. It made a big difference." ■



TIM SRANCIK has written for *ABRN* and sister publications *Motor Age* and *Aftermarket Business World* for more than a decade. tsrancik@yahoo.com

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Tracy Skallman

Date: 09/10/19

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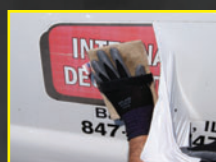
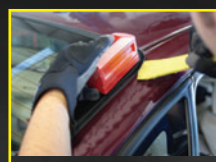
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The importance of business health

The commitment you make to ensure well managed finances will pay dividends

In the beginning of June, I started a journey of better health. Ever since my wife and I moved back to Mississippi in 2004, life and career have taken their toll; I have found myself fat and lazy. This is not meant to be negative talk, but to be real. Then, I had one of those “aha!” moments. It has taken a lot of work, but this new journey has been a lot of fun and very interesting. I made a commitment to be active for 30 days straight at the gym/home and I have met my goal every day but one!

You may wonder how my personal health journey relates to the collision repair industry and your business — I will explain.

I have been in and around the collision repair industry all my life. I started going to our shop when I was 9 years old. I have grown up seeing my granddad, uncles and father run the business. Fast forward 30 years...things have changed immensely. It has become more complicated within the business side of collision repair.

Just as we want great personal health, we want great business health as well. This means the heart of the business: the financials. The only problem is that a lot of us start to fall into a “fat and lazy” mentality when it comes to our finances. It’s so easy to make up excuses and trick ourselves into thinking everything is going well, and we are doing all that we can do, when what we may need to be is honest about the health of our business. Most people are not being realistic when it comes to financials. Just like I have made the commitment to better myself through going to the gym every day, I decided to also make a commitment to work on the financials every day. You are probably like me, pulled in many different directions in your business, but the commitment you make to ensure money is being managed well will pay dividends in the long run. Here is a brief list of good business habits that can help you just as it has helped me.

- **Meet with your CPA at least on a monthly basis.** Go over the financial statements. If you do not know how to understand your financial statements, be sure and ask your CPA for



JUST AS WE WANT GREAT PERSONAL HEALTH, WE WANT GREAT BUSINESS HEALTH AS WELL. THIS MEANS FOCUSING ON THE HEART OF THE BUSINESS: THE FINANCIALS.

help, or you may want to invest in a business class to help you better understand where you need to be. Your financial statements are your keys to success, and making sure you know what decisions you need to make is crucial. The financial statements are the key to your business health and keeping you on the road to proper health, keeping you from becoming fat and lazy again.

- **Work with a 20-group.** One of the items that has helped me tremendously is working with my virtual 20-group. If you are like me and have a hard time getting out of the shop for an extended length of time, this is a great way to interact and meet with similar-minded people who want to improve their businesses.

- **Communicate with your business partners (vendors).** What I mean by this is to make sure that vendors and other partners know what your philosophy is. A lesson that my grandfather and my dad taught me a long time ago is to make sure you adhere to the golden rule. Treat everyone the way that you want to be treated. We have a lot of animosity in our industry right now that can cause a lot of problems. Although, if you adhere to

the principles of the golden rule, then all those with negativity will succumb to your philosophy and way of thinking. This will build trust and improve your business health.

- **Set aside a specified time each day to work on your financials.** Work on the business and not just in it. This is a habit that I had to figure out, but it is a great one that will help you become a better businessperson. I wear a lot of hats at my shop, but the most important hat that I wear is the financial hat. If we are not making a profit, then we must figure out what is happening and where we address these areas to realize a profit.

It may seem simple, but if you want good health, both personally or in business, don’t be fat and lazy. 📌

PATRICK PORTER is a 3rd generation shop owner at Porter’s Body Shop in Brookhaven, Miss. He is an I-CAR instructor and has his AMi Accredited Automotive Management and Collision Repair Estimator Certificates. patrickdporter@gmail.com

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